

H2O Just Add Water, A Fishy Tale

by Krystalslazz

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Summary: Set 3 years after Graduation. They face new adventures.

RikkixZane EmmaxAsh CleoxLewis BellaxWill and OC Please Read and Review. No flames please. This is my first fic. Better than sounds. Goes through their adult lives after high school. Enjoy. Complete.

1. Prologue and Chapter 1

**A/N: Background:**

-After Graduation, unknown to the girls the Moon Pool's remaining magic slowly began healing the cave and pool. After a quite a few months of this it was back to full health and magic. While it was healing the girls hang out and met up at Lewis' Secret Fishing Spot. After 6months the girls decided to go back and look at their beloved pool. To their surprise it was just as they first found it.

- Sophie Benjamin, Will's sister moved to Perth as she was offered an amazing job.

-All main characters have been to university or a polytechnic.

- Rikki and Zane have initiated their relationship again. Zane begged on his knees (literally) for forgiveness, and Rikki " flattered - let them become friends again. After a while they got back together. Mr Bennett helped with a financial debt of Zane's so he could keep the cafe in exchange Zane promised to go to polytechnic, and it flourished again when Rikki helped him manage it.

- Rikki and Zane live together in a house near the cafe

-Bella and Cleo flat together in an apartment.

-Emma lives with Ash

-When Emma came back from her holidays, after being told many stories

of their new friend Bella, (none of which included the fact that she was a mermaid and that she was in on their secret) she met her and they became great friends. The first time they saw each other as mermaids was when the girls met up at the regenerated moon pool a few days after meeting and the two of them had the shock of their lives. Will made another crystal necklace for Emma, so again all the mermaids had matching necklaces.

-After another year of disliking each other, Will and Zane put aside their differences for the sake of the girls. Later on they became good friends.

Characters:

Isabella 'Bella' Hartley A music teacher, sings at Rikki's CafÃ© in her spare time, became a mermaid in the sea caves of Ireland when she was nine, and has the power to change water into gelatine and a crystalline substance she can also explode the water or jelly. She has been a mermaid for the longest â€“ 12 years. She studied music at university. In a relationship with Will Benjamin. Aged 21. Birthday: 6th December

Cleo Sertori A marine biologist â€“ works at the marine park as a dolphin trainer. Became a mermaid at the same time as Emma and Rikki in the Moon Pool. She has been a mermaid for 5 years. She studied marine biology at university. Has the ability to manipulate and mould water, as well as increase or decrease the amount of water present. She can also control the wind. In a relationship with Lewis McCartney. Aged 21. Birthday: 12th July

Rikki Chadwick â€“ Treasure Hunter â€“ searches for deep sea treasure. Studied archaeology at university. Co-manager of Rikki's Cafe. Became a mermaid at the same time as Emma and Cleo in the Moon Pool. She has been a mermaid for 5 years. Her power is the ability to manipulate heat in water, ranging from warming to boiling, which eventually grows to allow control over fire and lightning. In a relationship with Zane Bennett. Aged 21. Birthday: 1st October

Emma Gilbert â€“ A Primary School Teacher. After school she serves as the schools swim coach. (She makes sure she always keeps dry) Studied a Bachelor of Arts and teaching. She became a mermaid at the same time as Cleo and Rikki in the Moon Pool. She has been a mermaid for 5 years. She has the ability to freeze water, manipulate clouds, ice and snow. In a relationship with Ash Dove. Aged 21. Birthday: 15th March

Ash Dove â€“ Horse trainer and a riding coach. In a relationship with Emma Gilbert. Aged 23. Birthday: 2nd January

Lewis McCartney - Scientist. Specialised in Marine Science. He returned permanently from America to the Gold Coast after a year of studying. He works in a Research Institute. In a relationship with Cleo Sertori. Aged 21. Birthday: 5th February

Zane Bennett â€“ Owner and co-manager with Rikki of Rikki's Cafe. He went to polytechnic and studied business. In a relationship with Rikki Chadwick. Aged 22. Birthday: 30th November

Will Benjamin â€“ A marine biologist and dolphin trainer, also a

free diver and swimmer. Is employed as a dolphin trainer at the marine park, does the occasional competition for free diving. Colleagues with Cleo. In a relationship with Bella Hartley. Aged 21. Birthday: 9th May

**_A/N: I made up their birthdates for the sake of my story_*

**Introducing: **

**Anna Matthews â€“ **Architect. New mermaid. She has the ability to boil water and manipulate water. In a relationship with Ben Charles. Aged 21. Birthday: 7th April

**Robert 'Ben' Charles â€“ **Builder and engineer. New merman. He has the ability to freeze water and manipulate water. In a relationship with Anna Matthews. Aged 22. Birthday: 14th August

_**H2O Just Add Water- Fan fiction **_â€“ set 3 years after Graduation.

Chapter 1

Mako Island

Anna walked casually along the rocks beside the flowing river. She paused, admiring its beauty and that of the sunset. As she stood there, breathing in the fresh air, the beautiful full moon rose gracefully into the sky, as the birds squawked the arrival of dusk. She had a heavy duty torch in her hands, ready for when it would be dark. She resumed walking momentarily, but she soon stopped again, hearing someone shouting her name. Her boyfriend, Ben, called to her as he emerged from the forest. Anna strolled towards him. Suddenly, the ground gave way beneath her and the torch fell from her hands. She slid swiftly down a tunnel into an underground cavern, dark and ominous yet beautiful. Ben ran to the entrance of the hole to see if she was alright.

"Anna!"

"I'm fine Ben! Come down here it's amazing," Anna said as she took in her surroundings fully.

"Will we be able to get back up? Oh never mind..." His sentence trailed off.

Ben grabbed the torch and prepared to slide carefully down.

"I'm coming!" he called down into the tunnel "Whoa...!"

"Look at this rock Ben! It's amazing..." Ben silenced her with a kiss.

"I'm glad to see you're alright..."

"Oh stop it Ben!" She interrupted, amused at the loving tone in his voice.

They walked hand in hand into the next cavernous room. An almost perfectly circular pool with glistening water lay there silently. The

ceiling rose up in a volcanic cone and the sky was clear to see.

"The water looks so inviting, Ben." Anna said while looking longingly at the lucid liquid.

They kicked off their shoes and waded onto the shallow step of the pools edge. The moon rose above the volcanic cone as they looked deeply in each other's eyes, lost in a dream. Ben leaned in for a kiss, but as he did sparkling water droplets rose out of the water, ruining the romantic moment, the stillness disrupted. Ben pulled back abruptly and Anna looked around startled. After the moon passed by, the bubbles subsided. They shared a shocked look and stepped out of the pool the return their shoes to their feet. The couple managed to scramble back up the way they came, back to their campsite. Little did they know that new surprises would be just around the corner...

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2

'_Rikki's' Cafe â€“ The Next Day_

Twenty One year old Rikki Chadwick and her boyfriend Zane Bennett, walked hand in hand happily out of their manager's office.

"All done?" She asked him casually.

"Finally" He sighed with relief. "This means I can spend more time with you tonight." He smiled mischievously and stole a kiss.

"Oi, you! Not here, not now!" Rikki exclaimed.

Zane put on a fake chagrined face.

"You didn't enjoy that?"

"I never said I didn't enjoy it!" Rikki said as she punched him playfully in the arm. The two of them walked over to a table where three other couples were sitting. Lewis had his arm wrapped over Cleo's shoulder, and with his other arm, he was drawing one of his tell tale hearts in sugar on the table. They were gazing deeply into each other's eyes and smiling. Emma and Ash were holding hands and were deep in conversation. Bella and Will were kissing on the far side of the table, oblivious to the world.

"Achem!" Rikki cleared her throat. No one reacted, but Zane move to place his arms around her waist.

"Achem!" She said again, this time louder. Again, she received no reply.

"Oh, come on! Enough of this! Do you guys really have to do that in public? She shouted.

This got some response.

"No need to shout!" Cleo exclaimed.

As Lewis said at the same time, "In fact we do!"

Rikki looked up at Zane and mouthed, 'Why do I even bother?'

He just shrugged.

Cleo and Lewis leaned in for a kiss. As they did so they were interrupted by Rikki.

"Oh please!" She exclaimed.

"Anyway, how are all the love birds doing this morning?" Rikki asked, as she moved to sit down, pulling Zane down with her. They looked into each other's eyes...

Flashback

Emma, Cleo and Bella dived into the water simultaneously on their moonstruck way to Mako Island. The usually calm Rikki panicked. The nineteen year old had been through this sort of thing before, but never by herself. Ash, Lewis and Will were all out of town for a few days; this meant she could only go to one person — Zane. She bit her lip in distress. Just last year she had promised Zane that she would never go to him for help. She laughed softly at how untrue that promise was going to be. She made up her mind and ran to the Bennett's house.

"Hello...oh, it's you Rikki," he said rudely, "Zane!" Mr Bennett turned away from the stricken Rikki. Zane came to the door.

"Hey Rikki...what's with the dark glasses and the fishing hat?" He asked, but soon clicked. "Oh! Oh!" She nodded shyly, the hat slipping further over her eyes as she did.

Zane grabbed his coat and left the house with a purposeful stride.

"What happened?" Zane asked.

"The full moon's up - what do you think?" Rikki replied sarcastically.

As they walked briskly towards the dock, three girls gazing at the moon ran past them.

"That's them!" They exclaimed at the same time.

Rikki and Zane turned around mid-step and followed them down the road. The moonstruck Bella slowed down to stop and looked over a fence, influencing Emma and Cleo do the same. Rikki and Zane looked questioningly at each other. Emma sneaked over to the wooden gate and unlatched it, making the door swing open with a creak. She turned around and made a beckoning gesture with her hand. Cleo giggled as the three of them slipped into the stranger's garden. Rikki and Zane allowed some time before they snuck in after the girls. By now it was midnight and the owners of the house were asleep or not home as all the lights were out. Suddenly Rikki and Zane heard a large splash. They gave each other a quick look, and ran into the garden, all sense of stealth out the window. The hat and dark glasses Rikki was wearing

restricted her vision but she raced through the garden like a bull in a china shop. Two more splashes could be heard when Rikki and Zane finally arrived at the pool of disaster; three mermaids stared up at them. Rikki put her hands on her head in desperation.

"What are you doing!" she whispered forcefully.

"Swimming...Rikki, you should join us," Emma said in a sing-song voice.

"Don't be stupid!" Rikki retorted, exasperated. She rolled her eyes, this motion was lost however, her dark glasses blocking anyone from seeing the action.

Unexpectedly, a hand whipped around her leg and yanked forcefully, sending her falling into the pool. Another splash rang out into the silent night.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter 3

"Now look what you've done!" Rikki exclaimed as her tail appeared. She grabbed the glasses and made sure to avoid looking at the moon.

Suddenly a frozen ball of water flew at her head; she dodged missing by a whisker. Cleo and Emma had begun to attack. The moon now had a complete hold on the three mermaids.

"Help me!" Rikki said to Zane frantically.

Zane ran round the pool trying to work out what to do, his hands on his head.

A frozen water tentacle came at Rikki. Rikki raised her arm to counter the attack. Soon the tower became a hiss of steam. The moonstruck girls attacked again and again, each attack coming from different angles. Rikki blocked the surge of water each time with her power.

Meanwhile, Zane was fending off Bella. He was trying to pull her out of the pool, but each time he tried, she would turn the water around her to jelly, making herself heavier than normal. Straight after Zane decided his efforts were fruitless, Bella used her powers on one of Cleo's water tentacles. The tentacle came towards Rikki slowly, threateningly. Rikki tried her power against it, at first the gelatine melted but as Bella hardened it, Emma froze it also. This proved too much for the singular mermaid. As Cleo made it attack, Rikki ducked under the water, and swam then out of the way. Rikki evaded many of these attacks, she was becoming very fatigued. Just as she thought she could have a momentary rest, another large gelatine tentacle came at her. As it launched itself forward, Zane hoisted her out of the way, using all his energy, onto the pavement beside the pool. If Rikki had not have moved, the force of that tentacle would have knocked her unconscious at the very least. The effort it took to lift a mermaid out of the water left Zane on the ground breathing heavily. Just as she was flung on dry land her glasses fell off. Fortunately the last of the full moon's rays had just disappeared and

then sun was rising.

"Zane!" Rikki gasped, "You saved me!"

"It was nothing," he wheezed. He was amazed at what adrenaline could do.

Now on dry ground, Rikki dried herself and transformed back into a human. Zane hoisted three more mermaids out of that pool, and Rikki dried them all. Zane and Rikki swiftly half carried, half dragged the three girls out of the garden, not before Zane retrieved Rikki's soggy hat from the water.

By the time the girls and Zane arrived back at Cleo and Bella's apartment, it was early morning. After laying the unconscious girls on the floor, Rikki and Zane collapsed on the couch.

Rikki looked up at Zane with an vulnerable look on her face.

"Thank you for saving my life...Or at least saving me from a blinding headache, I really do appreciate it..." Rikki rambled.

"It's ok, you know I care about you, right?" He replied weakly. Rikki nodded cautiously "I've missed you," he continued.

There was a moment of silence. "I've missed you too," she replied. Finally, the admission he had been waiting for, for months.

"Can we give this another shot?" he asked. She nodded with a smile.

"I am terribly sorry for what I did last year... forgive me?" He asked

"You are already forgiven..." Rikki said. Carefully, Zane pushed a stray piece of hair behind her ear. Slowly, they leant in and their lips connected. It was chaste but significant.

"Does this mean we are together again?" He questioned her seriously, once they had pulled apart.

"I'll think about it." Rikki laughed at Zane's expression. "I may need some more convincing." She grinned. Zane leaned in to kiss her again but they were interrupted by a groan.

Cleo was holding her head with a splitting headache.

Bella and Emma, who had just woken, sat up slowly.

"Oh my head," Bella moaned

"What happened last night, it's a blank for me," Emma asked with her hand on her head.

Rikki began to rattle off the story;

"Pretty much we were all at Emma's parents house 'cos they are away and somehow the moonlight got Bella, then Emma, and then Cleo. I managed to find an old fishing hat and dark glasses so I wouldn't get moonstruck too. You three went to the docks and dived into the water

to go who knows where, and then I went and got Zane. You guys jumped into some random's pool and attacked me. Zane saved me from you guys' attacks and we left when the sun rose. Now we are here and I'm summing up what happened last night!"

"Yeah, what she said," Zane said.

"Oka-ay..." Emma said.

"Oopsy" said Cleo

"So are you guys a thing now?" Bella asked smiling slyly.

"I guess..." Zane replied.

Rikki just smiled.

End of Flashback

That was nearly three years ago now and their relationship had been going strong. Rikki believed she was in love. Since that day Rikki had again become co-manager with Zane of her namesake cafe. She had also moved in with Zane, into an apartment a short walk from the cafe.

OoOoO

A girl with bright green eyes and auburn hair entered the cafe and was followed by a handsome guy with dirty blonde hair. She was wearing a lime green tank top and denim shorts. He was in blue boardies and a black singlet. They sat down at a table on the far side of the room, away from the group. Rikki got up and walked over to their table. She had sent all the employees home early. This was because it had been a slow day, and any customers that came in until closing could be served by Rikki and Zane.

"Can I help you?" Rikki asked

"Oh, hi," The guy looked up "Yes, could I have a berry bonanza?"

"One for me too, thanks" The girl said, and smiled at Rikki.

"Sure thing," Rikki said, while writing their order on a little flip pad. "Hey, have I seen you guys around here before?" She asked casually, looking up.

"No, I don't think so, the two of us have recently moved here from Brisbane" the guy replied.

"My name is Robert but please call me Ben and this is my girl friend Anna." He gestured to her, and then reached out to shake Rikki's hand, which she readily accepted.

"Nice to meet you," Anna interjected and held out her hand also to Rikki.

"Nice to meet you both, I'm Rikki" Rikki said as she shook her hand. "I'll bring your smoothies over shortly." Rikki went back to the counter to begin making their smoothies. As she was making them, Cleo

came over to the counter and asked if she could heat up an apple pie that she had brought along. Rikki thought this was quite odd, but let her anyway. Cleo placed the pie into the microwave, set the timer and then walked back to Lewis' waiting arms.

'BANG'

The microwave blew up, sending a puff of smoke into the smoke alarm and giving everyone a fright.

"OH NO!" Rikki yelled "that's gonna set the..."

Streams of water fell from the ceiling, and the alarm began to wail.

"...the sprinklers off...oh great" She sighed as she toppled over, an orange scaly tail in place of her legs. Cleo, Emma and Bella had also transformed, sliding onto the floor from their boyfriends. They all panicked. There were two strangers in the cafe and there were four mermaids in plain sight. Will ran over to all the windows and shut the blinds, pulled the curtain over the door and closed the cafe. Zane and Ash tried to move in front of the girls to hide them unsuccessfully. Lewis ran over to the mains to turn the sprinklers off. As he did so everyone realised that they weren't the only mermaids in the cafe. A frozen stream of water hung from the ceiling above Ben's head, he was perfectly dry with his arms still above his head sheltering himself in shock. Anna was not so lucky, she found herself on the floor with what her legs should be a slimy orange scaled tail. As all this settled in she screamed. Lewis ran to her and clamped a hand over the red head's mouth.

"Do you want everyone from outside running in here?" He asked frantically.

"This is just wonderful!" Rikki exclaimed sarcastically.

"What the Hell!" Ben exclaimed in a shaky voice and lowered his arms.

"Anna is it?" Lewis asked. Anna nodded.

"Is this the first time you've transformed like this?" She nodded again.

"Def-def- definitely..." She managed to stutter.

"Why am I surrounded by fish, and more importantly, why am I one of them!" she demanded getting over her initial shock.

"Ahhh..." Lewis said at a loss for words.

Rikki had been drying the floor as they were speaking. Once it had dried she directed her power at her own body 'steam drying' herself as she always called it.

"Cleo!" Rikki barked. "Did you remember to take the metal fork off the top?"

"Hmm...Ahh..." Cleo mumbled sheepishly looking at floor

"Cleo!" Everyone exclaimed.

Rikki began steam drying the other mermaids.

"Okay the situation is this; we now have another mermaid — Anna and a mysteriously frozen sprinkler — which I didn't freeze by the way guys!" Emma announced.

Directing his speech towards Anna and Ben, Lewis asked with a scientific tone,

"Have you two been in the proximity of pool in a cavern on Mako Island lately; or more importantly last night?"

"As a matter of fact yes... that is a bad thing isn't it..." He said as he saw the reactions of the group. "We were there last night; we waded into a pool with a view of the sky. Damn strange it was. A lot of sparkles..." he trailed off. The girls looked at each other knowingly.

Rikki had dried all the girls except for Anna.

"This may sting a little..." Rikki warned as she began steam drying Anna. Once Anna was her human self again, Cleo said,

"Maybe we should go somewhere else to talk about this further..."

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Lewis' Secret Fishing Spot, half an hour later...

Theory #1 — Anna is a mermaid

Theory #2- Ben is a merman

Theory #3 — They have some powers

Theory #4 — Recently changed at Mako Island

These theories are what drove the group of ten to test them at Lewis' secret fishing spot.

Lewis managed to get Emma and Bella, a reluctant Rikki, and a 'more than happy to help' Cleo into the water along with Anna and Ben to help with encouraging the new merfolk to accept their transformation. Sure enough, all five girls and Ben transformed, and long tails could be seen.

It was a curious experience for them all to see a merman. His tail was a deep red, a lot darker than the girls' tails. A single sash of reddish scales ran across his bare muscular chest from shoulder to hip.

Ben had his mouth wide open in shock.

"Okay everyone," Lewis announced, "Theories #1, #2, and #4, have been

proven correct."

The guys pulled the girls and Ben out of the water so Rikki could dry them off after she had done herself.

"Okay, now for a powers test..." Lewis instructed. "Let's use this rock pool," girls, do what you do as a demo," he gestured to Emma, Rikki, Cleo and Bella and then pointed again to the pool.

Cleo went first, she moved and moulded the water into a tower making it twirl and ascend higher and higher into the sky.

"Where's all the extra water coming from?" Anna enquired to Lewis.

"To be honest, we have no idea! - it's magic...?" Lewis answered.

Cleo then made the wind blow briefly to demonstrate her weather control.

Anna and Ben were already impressed, but it was only the start of the show.

Rikki went next boiling the water, all the while striking lightening down onto the sand and making a bush burst into flames. The bush was put out by Emma.

Emma followed freezing solid what once was boiling. She also caused a small snow storm as a demonstration.

Bella moved forward after her.

"My power is not all as grand as that..." she said before powering up.

Bella made the water in the rock pool a gelatinous mass.

"Go on," touch it" She said to the curious newbies. They did. After this she hardened it into a solid mass. Soon after she released the water in the rock pool, changing it back to its original form.

At the end of the display of powers, Anna and Ben were very, very impressed.

"How long have you been...ahh...?" Ben asked

"Mermaids?" Emma responded

"Yeah..."

Cleo answered, "Five years now isn't it?" She was met by a series of nods.

"Except for me," Bella spoke up, "I've been a mermaid for twelve years."

"Don't worry we'll help you." She smiled at the couples' nervous faces.

"How about you two try on the rock pool, to see if you have powers," Lewis said.

Ben went first; he pushed his palm out in front of him. Suddenly the pool froze over.

"Whoa!" He gasped and took a step back.

Rikki made her hand into a fist and melted the ice from where she was standing.

"Next!" She instructed. Anna moved to the rock pool nervously. The events from the day had really freaked her out. She positioned her hand as Ben had done and focused on the water, nothing happened. Frustrated she tried again in a similar position.

"Don't worry," Rikki said, "It took me a few days to figure out my power." She looked at Anna sympathetically. Anna groaned.

"All the girls have different hand positions when they use their powers, maybe you should try the others' positions." Lewis deducted.

Bella stretched her hand out in demonstration. Anna tried using this one but nothing happened. Rikki showed Anna next. This time as Anna concentrated on the rock pool's water using Rikki's position, a few solitary bubbles floated to the surface. She gasped in surprise.

"Did I do that?" She asked insecurely.

"Yes!" Rikki exclaimed, "You have my power,"

Anna tried again, this time the water bubbled and some steam rose off the surface of the water.

>For the next little while Anna concentrated on the water, Rikki coached her until she had the water boiling at the level that Rikki wanted.<p>

"Wait a minute—" Bella started, "If Ben got Emma's power and Anna got Rikki's, who got Cleo's? You said that Charlotte got all three..." She trailed off.

"True" Lewis announced after a pause.

Cleo stepped forward and demonstrated her hand position and how she moved the water to the new couple.

Ben went first; nothing happened. Anna followed. She tried using the hand she used for boiling. Again nothing happened. Lewis suddenly suggested to them to use their other hand. Focusing on the water she used her other hand in Cleo's position, and a slim tentacle of water rose up slowly coming towards Anna. "How do I get it to stop?" She said panicking.

Cleo quickly stepped in.

"Release your control of the water." She said in a gentle but commanding tone.

When Anna didn't release it Cleo used her own experienced power to force the tentacle back into the rock pool.

"We may need to work on that one..." Cleo smiled at Anna.

Ben stepped forward to try with his other hand, another tentacle weaker than Anna's rose out of the rock pool. He then froze it with his other hand.

"Wow!" Everyone smiled.

It had been concluded. Ben had the ability to freeze and mould water, and Anna had the ability to boil water and mould it also. Ben and Anna both tried their luck on controlling the weather, neither could. After the trialling, the group of couples decided to go back to Cleo and Bella's apartment to get to know each other better, knowing that in the near future they would be spending a lot of time together.

Over the next few months the group of ten bonded and became really good friends. Ben fitted in really well with the guys especially Will and Anna definitely fitted in with Cleo and the girls. Rikki, Cleo and Emma taught and coached Anna and Ben with their powers and Bella went swimming with them often. There were a few mishaps along the way but luckily their first full moon went off without a hitch.

Flashback

"Who wants a Berry Bonanza?" Rikki asked the group of nine.

Ben shot his hand up, unknowing that his palm was flat facing Rikki.

Rikki felt herself freezing up. Her body went cold from the neck down and she saw the skin on her arms sparkling.

"Idiot!" She yelled causing heads to turn. "Sorry" she said sheepishly to the customers at the cafe. Luckily Zane was blocking their view of Rikki's frozen lower body. Noticing what he had done, Ben had lowered his arm and was looking scared of the angry Rikki.

"So, so sorry Rikki!" He apologised. Everyone else was acting as if nothing unusual had happened.

Rikki began melting the ice her magical body heat was counter acting the magic of Ben's Rikki began melting the ice

"That was too close!" She whispered forcefully.

Once the ice was gone she quickly dried herself and her clothes so she wouldn't go 'fish' in the cafe again. In a huff Rikki walked back to her house but five minutes from the cafe along the waterfront, she decided to get away from the group to cool down. She was not amused.

End of Flashback

That event was one of many close calls â€“ one of the mild ones that

there were with their powers and water. Eventually with quite a lot of coaching the two of them got there " in control of their powers and the situation. All five mermaids and merman became very close; initially there were two groups of three. The moon pool became really crowded so they ended up meeting over at Lewis' secret fishing spot on the rocks when they wanted proper discussion. The moon pool still remained their special place however and they went their frequently, alternating between the two places.

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Mako Island " Moon pool cavern " **6 months later**...

"...Happy Birthday dear Bella, Happy Birthday to you!" singing was heard throughout the cavern.

Hip Hips and Hoorays rung out and Bella giggled then blew out the twenty two candles on the cake.

"Thank you guys" She said as Rikki, Cleo and Emma hugged her.

This was to be the last birthday of the year; she was the last to turn another year older.

After eating the party food, the whole group decided to go swimming. The couples each swimming hand in hand along the surface of the water!'

Bella and Cleo's Apartment "half a year later...*

Cleo; dressed in a long and shiny purple dress with her crystal necklace, her hair in a loose bun descended the stairs. In the living room, a nervous Lewis was waiting for her.

"Wow, Cleo, you look... amazing"

"Thank you," She smiled, looking at the ground self consciously.

"Let's go shall we?" Lewis asked more confidently and he held his arm out for his girlfriend to take.

The well dressed couple walked out to Lewis's car, and were soon on their way to the restaurant for their date.

Meanwhile at Will's Boathouse...

"Bella, we have been going out for three years now," Will paused, gathering his thoughts, "Would you like to move in with me?" He saw her surprised expression and began to ramble.

"Oh, ah... you don't have to move into the boathouse with me, I was thinking we could maybe buy or rent a house nearby or something..." he continued getting flustered.

Bella leaned in and silenced his ramblings with a kiss.

"Hey, I would love to...but I'll have to ask Cleo first though..."

At this Will picked her up and swung her round, obviously ecstatic at her answer...

Romantic Restaurant in town â€“ fifteen minutes later..._

Cleo looked round about her, taking in the very expensive restaurant as Lewis walked them to their table.

"Lewis! What is this? Can you afford it?" She whispered to him. All he said in reply was,

"You're worth it," Then he kissed her.

After ordering, eating and discussing various things, Lewis began looking rather bothered and nervous. Cleo noticed this and asked him what was wrong.

"Nothing, I'm absolutely fine," He replied quickly.

"Okay then..." Cleo said unconvinced.

After a pause Lewis began talking quite directly.

"Cleo, I've been thinking about us and what will be happening in the future, and I've realised that I can't live without youâ€|" he trailed off, and his hand reached into his pocket. He left the chair and grabbed Cleo's hand. He kneeled. Cleo was awestricken she had a feeling she knew what was coming next.

"Cleo Sertori, Will you marry me?" Lewis asked desperately, Cleo paused, so many things were running through her mind.

"Yes! Lewis! Yes, I love you," She exclaimed joyfully and rushed into Lewis' arms. He swooped her into a romantic kiss, slipping the beautiful ring onto her finger.

The other couples in the restaurant had witnessed the spectacle and burst into applause.

Both Cleo and Lewis smiled and blushed; they had suddenly found the floor very entertaining.

"Goodnight Lewis," Cleo said at the door of her apartment, "I had a great time," she smiled at him. She turned to go inside.

"Wait!"

Cleo turned back to her fiancÃ©, the door half open.

"Yes?"

"Ahh, well, I was thinking that since we are â€“ you know, engaged, would you like to move in with me?"

"Um, sure, yeah," She smiled, "I just have to ask Bella and my

dadâ€| "

"Okay, sure thing," Lewis said relieved, he had gotten the two hardest questions of his life over with. "I love you, Cleo" he said,

"I love you too," Cleo replied.

The couple kissed lovingly, and Cleo went inside.

She shut the door behind her and leaned against it.

She sighed joyfully.

'Isn't he a dream' she thought as she admired her ring.

"Someone's happy," Bella appeared at the top of the stairs "Spill, what happened!" she said seeing Cleo's love-struck face.

"He proposedâ€| " Cleo replied dreamily, looking up at Bella.

"Oh my! Congratulations!" she ran down the stairs to meet Cleo, "I didn't know he had it in him." She commented. Cleo admired her ring.

"Let me see it!" Bella exclaimed, gesturing to the ring on Cleo's finger. She held it up willingly.

"Wow," Bella breathed. The ring had three small diamonds encircling an oval shaped emerald; it was sparkling in the light.

Cleo and Bella both went upstairs to the living room for supper.

"How'd he do it?" Bella asked.

Cleo gave a detailed description of the restaurant and the proposal, while eating good old Tim Tams.

"I need to talk to you about living arrangements," they both said at the same time. They laughed.

"You too?" Again they spoke at the same time, and Bella gestured to Cleo, "You go first,"

"Well, Lewis asked me to move in with him, since we are engaged now." Cleo stated,

"Will asked me the same thing!" Bella exclaimed

"Oh, okay" Cleo replied, "Since I'm going to move in with Lewis, that means you and Will are free to use our apartment," she deducted.

"Sweet" Bella said "We'll ask the guys tomorrow,"

Soon after finishing the Tim Tam packet, the two of them went their separate ways - to their bedrooms for the night.

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6

The Next Day â€“ Cleo and Bella's Apartment

There was a bustle of activity at their apartment the next day.

Cleo jumped into her car and quickly drove to work at the Marine Park. Cleo was in such a rush that she forgot to tell her friends about last night's episode, and Lewis was in the same boat.

Bella was a little more laid back. She had already been up for her morning walk, and when she got back she saw Cleo scoffing down her breakfast. Bella worked at a nearby intermediate school as a teacher of music, so she didn't have to be at work for another half hour.

Once Cleo arrived at work she began her daily routine. This included feeding the dolphins. Over the years Ronnie and his 'girlfriend' had had a few pups- these dolphins were the ones Cleo were in charge of. She had trained them with the help of Will. Will walked up to Cleo, and they exchanged greetings. They soon went on to do the usual tasks of their day.

Ash, Emma, Bella, Ben and Anna had all arrived at work and begun their daily tasks.

While their friends were working Rikki and Zane were just starting their day.

"Morning Sir" Rikki mock saluted the sleepy Zane.

He turned over and buried his face deeper into the pillow and mumbled something indecipherable.

"What was that sir?" She asked with mock seriousness. "Did you say you were awake? Good then!" She said brightly.

A pillow came hurtling towards her head, she dodged this with ease.

"Aha!" She exclaimed, "Its War!"

Before Zane realised, a Rikki still in her pyjamas had pounced on him and was pulling the warm blankets off of him.

"Arg! Rikki!" He exclaimed, she just laughed wrestling with him.

"Come on Sleepy Head, Time to start the day!"

By now Zane had his eyes open. "It's on!" He laughed and the two of the wrestled playfully until they landed on the floor, sheets and all.

After a few more moments of wrestling around, Zane claimed a kiss, ending their antics. After a brief pause Rikki playfully shoved Zane off her and dusted herself off.

"We'd better get to the cafÃ©, we're already late in opening,"

She offered him her hand which he readily took.

After getting dressed and freshening up, Rikki and Zane made their way to the cafÃ© and opened it for the day.

Lewis was also beginning the tasks of the day. The Marine Science Institute for which he worked was full of bustling people. He was walking down the docks to check the equipment on one of the Marine Institute's boats for a mission the next day. As he walked he stopped suddenly.

'It couldn't beâ€!' Lewis thought.

He turned to examine his discovery.

"Oh No!" He said under his breath, "She's back!"

He turned his head down and resumed his walk which seemed to be endless.

"Lewis?" A familiar voice asked, "Is that you?"

He kept walking like he hadn't herd. Finally he got to the Institute's boat. What he didn't bank on was the fact that that certain person would follow him.

"Lewis, I know it's you," the woman said in a disapproving tone.

Lewis slowly turned round to greet the woman with the long blonde hair.

"Hello, Dr Denman, long time no seeâ€!"

"Like wise Lewis," she replied, "Five years?"

"Mhmm," He responded, an unrecognisable expression on his face. "What are you doing back around here?" he asked, trying to sound friendly.

"Fish counts, more coral analysis, a typical job along the coast. What are you doing these days Lewis?"

"I'm a Marine Biologist , I work at the Institute down the road."

"And how are the girls going?" She asked

"Great yeah, Cleo and Iâ€!" He stopped midsentence realising he was freely talking to their enemy.

"You realise Dr Denmanâ€!"

"Call me Linda" she interrupted,

"You realise ' Linda' that the girls are ordinary now - no need to interfere with their lives, and mine as well like last time."

"Oh, I realise, I was just genuinely curious,"

After a few more minutes of exchanging chatter, Lewis managed to get away without seeming rude to complete his original task. A lot was running through his mind.

During his lunch break Lewis decided to break the news to Cleo. When Cleo answered her phone because of having speaker ID she said, "Hey Lewis! How's your day going?" She asked brightly.

"Works good but..." he trailed off uncertainly.

"But what?" Cleo asked concerned, knowing by his tone that something was up.

"Ahh, I was hoping not to worry you..."

"Just spit it out already" she interrupted

"She's back!" Lewis blurted.

"Who's back? You have to be a little more specific than that," Cleo replied getting frustrated

"She's back! Denman's back!" he exclaimed.

"WHAT!"

"Yeah, you heard me right..." Lewis replied.

"What, How, Who, Which, Where and Why?" Cleo asked frantically, after a pause.

As Cleo talked to Lewis, Will was watching concerned, then he spied something glinting in the sunlight, something on her finger. As he focused on it, he took a step back with a gasp.

'An engagement ring' he thought, then 'Wait, how long have they been engaged and why haven't I noticed before?'

Cleo was still talking to Lewis with a weird expression on her face. Once she hung up she turned back to Will.

"That was Lewis" she said,

"I gathered that," Will said with a smirk

"Anyway," Cleo continued, "Our old enemy is back â€“ Dr Denman!"

Will had never heard that name before; the girls never talked about past events often.

"Who's she?" he asked innocently,

"Just the Marine Biologist who... Oh sorry Will, I forgot you weren't around then..." she said awkwardly.

"Congratulations." Will said out of the blue.

"Huh?" Cleo asked confused

"Your ring..."

"OH!" she said sheepishly.

"So when were you going to tell us? When did it happen?" He asked as they resumed their duties,

"Sorry, It was last night, the most romantic dinner..." she trailed off lost in her daydream.

"Cleo?" He said, waving a hand in front of her face.

"Oh yeah, Well this morning was so hectic, I really did mean to tell you guys. I'll tell everyone when we meet up after work." She said.

"All goods, Congrats by the way," Will replied.

"Thank you" Cleo said in a small voice and smiled. "Oh, Will, Bella and I discussed the living arrangements last night; I'll let Bella tell you the details."

"Okay..." he smiled back questioningly.

7. Chapter 7

Chapter 7

Meanwhile at the Marine Institute...

Lewis put his phone back in his pocket. Cleo had taken that news better than he'd thought she would. This showed to him how much she had matured over the past years. The worried tone in her voice had made him want to go and hug her; but that would have to wait till after work.

Closing Time - Rikki's Cafe

After work all the friends met at Rikki's Cafe just before closing time, there were no customers. Rikki and Zane due to this were waiting at a table for the group to arrive. Zane had his arm slung across Rikki's shoulder, sipping on a smoothie she had just made. One after another with brief intervals the friends came in and sat down with their boyfriend or girlfriend. Anna and Ben were last to arrive. It was quite a squish.

"Next time I think we should sit in two groups at separate tables" Anna said as she tried to squeeze in beside Ben.

"So, what's the big news?" Rikki asked casually

"We have two announcements. Do you want the good news or the bad news first?" Lewis said

"Good, good news is always better first." Emma said.

"Okay then," he continued, "The good news is that..."

"WE'RE ENGAGED!" Cleo exclaimed interrupting her fiancÃ©.

Everyone gasped, except Bella and Will who already knew. There was immediate discussion after an awkward silence, the girls asking Cleo about the details and the guys congratulating Lewis.

"Achem..."

Everyone fell silent again with the exception of a few whispers.

"Do you still want to hear the bad news?" Lewis asked drawing out the anticipation.

Rikki said "Surprise me," While Emma said "Yes!" forcefully.

"Okay okay," Lewis said with a frown, "This is definitely not on the positive side..."

"We know that already, spit it out!" Zane said.

There was murmuring throughout the group.

"She's back, Denman's back!" Cleo said bluntly.

Rikki and Emma looked at each other then screamed "WHAT" at the same time. Zane paled.

"Who's this Denman?" Bella asked with support from Anna, Ash and Ben. Will just sat there waiting to be told more.

"Well..." Emma began

"She's just the evil marine biologist who trapped us and then almost made us science experiments..." Rikki interrupted

"Almost exposed us and experimented on us, probably would of put us in a glass jar all chopped up..." Cleo said

"CLEO!" Rikki continued "Anyway this was all thanks to Lewis and Zane,"

"Hey!" Lewis started

"... but now thank goodness she doesn't know we are mermaids" Rikki concluded "Long story short and no I'm not telling the rest right now"

"So, pretty much stay away from her and don't make it too suspicious. By the way she has long blonde hair, and we'll probably point her out for you guys..." Just as Lewis said this, Dr Denman walked into the cafe.

"Speak of the devil" Lewis said under his breath.

Spotting the familiar faces, Denman came over to the group.

"Hello everyone, how's it going?"

"Good, Good" was mumbled from the squished group at the table.

"Zane, you still feel good about what you did?" She asked with a frown

"Definitely" Zane stated, "As you can see Rikki is my girlfriend again now," He put his arm around her shoulders for emphasis, and she snuggled into him.

"I can see that." Denman replied, "So, I see you've made new friends; not the fishy type too eh?"

"No, no" The group laughed frantically.

Denman stood there waiting to be introduced.

"This is Will, Bella, Ben, Anna and Ash, Dr Denman" Lewis gestured to each person.

"Nice to meet you." Anna said diplomatically.

"Okay then, I'll see you round," and she walked off. Once she had left the room, the table burst into discussion.

"Right now, she's the least of our worries," Bella said, "Tonight's a full moon, remember?"

"Why don't we lock ourselves in our apartment?" Cleo suggested.

"Great Idea"

All the mermaids departed to go back to their houses to pack for the night.

Zane and Rikki's house ¢ later on...

"I'll miss you." Zane said lovingly, completely out of character for him, Rikki knew.

"It's only going to be for overnight Zane, stop being such a cry baby," she playfully punched him. "You'll see me at work tomorrow morning." Rikki continued, "Besides, I'll make it up to you tomorrow, and since when did you get so soppy?" she asked laughing. "You can always walk me there..."

"Okay Dokey" Zane said, happy to spend longer with Rikki.

The two of them locked the house and walked the short journey to Bella and Cleo's beachfront apartment.

The couple passionately kissed before Rikki pushed him away and said goodbye.

All the others were already there. Will and Lewis were putting black paper up on the windows and pulling the curtains. Emma decided to make icy pops for everyone, freezing some orange juice and bringing them over.

"Thanks Em," was heard all around.

An hour before the moon was to rise, Will left, leaving only Lewis as a guardian, just in case. The other guys were just a phone call away, dedicated to protecting the girlfriends.

Rikki popped the popcorn and Bella decided to make Jelly for everyone. She grabbed some tropical juice from the fridge and poured some into a bowl. Then she made it into gelatine, for everyone to dig into. The girls and Ben had gained a lot of control over their powers more recently, and the original four were very skilled indeed.

Cleo organised the movies and put one on. Just as she was doing this Rikki began to tease her. Rikki earned a splash of water in the face everyone laughed as her tail formed.

"It's alright guys, I'm fine, I'm totally fine..." Rikki said as she dried herself.

They decided to watch 'Aquamarine'

Halfway through the movie, half the food was gone. It seemed Ben had quite an appetite, especially for Bella's specialty.

Once the film had finished the mermaids had a discussion about whether the movie was complete nonsense or if it had some truths to it.

They concluded that there was some very, very twisted truth within the movie about mermaids.

But Rikki objected saying, "Nonsense!"

Everyone laughed.

"Do you think Denman will find out again?" Anna asked

"Not if we're careful..." Emma replied.

"You mean, if Lewis is careful..." Rikki began.

"Rikki" Cleo warned

"Sorry" she said sheepishly, "Force of habit, couldn't resist."

8. Chapter 8

Chapter 8

The next morning the five mermaids and merman decided to go swimming to Mako Island before work. They swam together twirling around and having the time of their lives racing on the way to the Moon Pool. As they approached the pool, Emma felt a random uncertainty and stopped suddenly.

As she stopped everyone rammed into her in the process.

She swam slowly into the entrance of the moon pool and stopped again in the arch just in case. The others following suite. It was just as

well she did because as she surfaced she heard familiar voices. Too familiar.

'Denman?' Cleo mouthed, Emma nodded in response.

All of them silently backed out of the cave.

Gesturing to the others to go to the surface so they could talk, Emma rose up towards the sunlit skies.

"Where to?" she asked

"How about the fishing spot?" Cleo asked.

She was answered by nods all around. Once they got there they bathed in the shallows, relaxing.

"I guess we'll have to meet here now, until she leaves, I don't think we should be out in the ocean much either..." Emma said. Everyone was in agreement.

For the next while the group spent pretty much all their time on land. It seemed like Denman hadn't noticed anything.

Cleo moved into Lewis' two bedroom house and Will moved in with Bella in her apartment.

Life was good.

Bella and Will's apartment, the next morning...

"Morning beautiful," Will said as he kissed her cheek. Bella blushed.

"So, about our four year anniversary tomorrow night, where would you like to go?" Will asked picking up her hands, holding them in front of himself.

"Ahh, I don't mind," she said looking into his eyes, "Anywhere with just the two of us," she smiled.

"I'll see what I can do," Will said and he kissed her tenderly.

The next night...

Bella and Will had just finished their meal at a simple but elegant restaurant in town. The couple returned back to their apartment. As they ascended the stairs Bella gasped as she took in her surroundings. The walls were covered in fairy lights and flowers and a hand painted sign saying 'Happy Anniversary' was hanging above the dining room table. A red candle sat in the middle, on a white table cloth, the cutlery already laid out for dessert.

"Will!" Bella gasped "I love it!"

He kissed her gently and pulled a chair out for her to sit on. Once she was seated, he gestured for her to wait and disappeared into the kitchen. As he emerged he carried a tray with two knickerbockers' glories, made in a pretty arrangement.

**(A/N- A knickerbockers' glory, for those who don't know, is like an ice-cream sundae with meringue, custard, cream, jelly and any other topping you may so desire, i.e. sprinkles or chocolate sauce)
**

They ate Will's delicious creations, Bella congratulating Will on the taste.

"Happy Anniversary Bella" Will said lovingly, kissing her tenderly,
"I love you,"

"I love you too," Bella smiled.

This was all the encouragement Will had needed.

He left his chair and went down on one knee.

Bella gasped in anticipation of what was to happen. She realised that she had done a lot of gasping that night.

"Isabella Hartley, Will you marry me?" Will asked with hope in his eyes.

"Yes, yes, yes! I thought you'd never ask!" She flew off her chair to hug him tightly.

"Bella, I can't breathe..." Will said after the initial impact had been lost. She released him reluctantly.

They kissed passionately as Will sipped a beautiful ring on her slim finger. She pulled back and looked at her new ring.

"Oh Will! It's beautiful; this must have cost you a fortune!" Bella exclaimed as she took in the large rocks on her ring.

"Anything for you Bells,"

"Oh, there's so much to plan; the wedding, reception and dress..." she continued rambling.

"Bella! We only just got engaged!" Will said.

"You're right; sorry, sometimes I just get a little carried away,"

"I'm just glad you're this happy about it, and to think I thought you might say no..."

"You didn't!"

"Sorry" Will said sheepishly

"I love you Will"

"I love you too Bells."

The next morning- The Moon Pool

Dr Denman, dressed in a wetsuit, surveyed the area around the moon pool.

It was miraculous that it was in such good shape, just the same as when she first found it. She had read that it had been destroyed by explosives.

She had returned a few months earlier to reminisce about what could have been those many years ago, when she had discovered those mermaids.

Flashback

Dr Denman and Greg got out of the pool. As she did she spied a shiny orange scale

"Where did this come from; didn't those girls lose their powers years ago...?" Denman wondered out loud to Greg "Hmmm"

Unknown to her, this was the day the group of mermaids had heard their discussions.

End of Flashback

This finding was what had brought her back to the cave once a week, along with her crew, when her schedule allowed it to investigate further. Today she was setting underwater cameras for fish counts, but her own initiative was to see if she could get observable facts-pictures of the mermaid that left that scale behind.

9. Chapter 9

Chapter 9

_The following day â€“ Rikki's Cafe _

Cleo was helping Rikki at the cafe, but Rikki had banned Cleo from using the microwave since that unfortunate incident. Anyway, Cleo was in a generous mood and was helping out.

Dr Denman walked in.

The two of them saw her and shared a glance, looking up from what they were doing. Cleo was clearing the till and Rikki was giving a smoothie to a waitress to take to one of the tables.

"Do you think she knows?" Cleo asked Rikki as Denman looked over at them with a strange expression on her face.

"Who know, I'm sure we'll find out soon" she deducted.

As Denman approached the counter they plastered fake smiles on their faces.

"Can I help you Dr Denman?" Rikki asked raising her eyebrows

"Yes, ah, could I have a Banana Fofana,"

"Yeah, sure. That'll be \$4.50 thanks."

Denman handed her money over to Cleo who put it in the newly cleared

till.

Rikki prepared the smoothie and brought it over to the doctor. As she handed it over, Denman somehow managed to spill it all over Rikki's front.

Rikki staring devils at the woman raced into the manager's office and closed the door as she came in. As soon as the door slammed shut Rikki toppled over, now bearing a large orange tail.

"You could've caught me you know!" Rikki exclaimed as Zane watched amused from his desk.

"Sorry 'bout that" Denman said apologetically.

"It's alright, could've happened to anyone," Cleo said, secretly she was thinking 'Nice way to see if we are still mermaids, she may be on to us,'

"I'm sure Rikki will be out in a few" she continued.

Rikki was. She came back remarkably quickly, wearing a dry shirt. As soon as she was on the floor back in the office she used her power to dry herself and Zane fetched a dry shirt for her to change into to make to act more convincing.

"And here she is," Cleo announced.

'Nice covering it up Miss Chadwick' Denman thought to herself taking in the fresh shirt and the speed at which she had returned to the counter.

After giving Denman a new smoothie, (sliding it across the counter this time to avoid another mishap) Rikki went back into the office, leaving Cleo to hold the fort for a few minutes.

She slumped into a chair breathing a sigh of relief.

"You okay?" Zane asked.

"Yeah...now," Rikki replied.

"Do you think she suspects anything?" Zane questioned

"Dunno, I made the change pretty quick â€“ thanks for the shirt by the way,"

"No problem" Zane replied.

"Hey, wanna go treasure hunting later?" Rikki asked casually

"Ahh...aren't you not supposed be swimming?"

"Yeah, but it can't hurt, could it?"

"Yes it would, "Zane interrupted firmly, "It would endanger you and your friends if you got caught. Please don't. For me and them. Not so soon,"

"Fine." Rikki replied deflated, "Just for you"

**A/N **_*Hey guys, sorry I have been really busy with stupid old homework and school work so the updates may grow farther apart in time. I will try and update ASAP. Thanks for your patience*_

10. Chapter 10

Chapter 10

That night Rikki lay awake, listening to Zane breathing beside her, thinking.

So, Dr Denman was back in her life again. She thought back to the first major encounter with the marine biologist.

Oh, there was so much that could have been different.

'If the three of us had used our powers on that metal grate instead of panicking, then we could have broken out' Rikki thought, 'If Emma and I had frozen and heated the metal weakening it, and if Cleo had then forced the grate open with a surge of water, the we would have escaped easily. Oh well' she thought with a sigh.

The Dock " a few days later...

As Lewis re-cast his fishing line off the edge of the wharf, he saw Denman on her boat, untying the mooring ropes.

'She must be leaving,' Lewis thought to himself.

Denman and her crew sailed out and disappeared over the horizon. After a little longer of fishing, Lewis packed up his gear and walked home.

Cleo was in the living room waiting for him.

"Lewis!" She exclaimed, obviously very happy to see him, beaming brightly.

Lewis returned the smile and moved over to hug her.

"Cleo, I have good news, Dr Denman may have left town!" He paused letting the information settle in. Once it had, Cleo said "Awesome! That means we can go swimming again!"

Lewis just smiled. She continued "I must tell the others."

Little did the group know but strange things would be to come.

All the mermaids and Ben eagerly rushed into the water, entering from Lewis' secret fishing spot, the boys staying on the beach. It was to be the first swim after a very long time, ages it seemed to them. (In reality it had only been about 2 weeks)

Once they had transformed Rikki sighed out,

"This is the life,"

The group sped off ducking and diving around through the water, the boyfriends just watching silently in awe. Will soon joined in, swimming off with Bella. Anna and Ben were swimming hand in hand quickly. After another five minutes Lewis and Ash also joined in, the heat on land was too much to bear. There was soon a full out splash fight. The girls made the biggest splashes, using their tails to make waves towards the guys.

After everyone got tired they relaxed in the sun warmed shallows. Soon the hunger kicked in. The guys decided to go and buy some lunch. Anna dried Ben off so he could go too. The remaining mermaids sped off to the depths.

Meanwhile- aboard Dr Denman's boatâ€|

"â€|Five objects moving very fast about a kilometre from our location." Greg said

"Good, good," Denman said, "They took the bait," she paused, "Wait a sec, did you say five?"

"Yesâ€|" he answered resignedly

"Hmmâ€|" Denman mused, "I wonder where the other two came fromâ€|" As Denman contemplated this two of the objects dropped from the radar.

'The equipment must be faulty,' she thought to herself, happy that she no longer had to contemplate the improbable fact of there being more mermaids.

In actual fact Bella and Anna had swum off from the group going to the depths of the ocean, off the radar, and then back to the beach to dry off and eat â€" they were starving. This left the original three mermaids in the ocean, at risk.

"Hey wanna go to the moon pool?" Cleo asked

"Would it be safeâ€|?" Emma asked uncertainly,

"Oh, come on, Em," Rikki said impatiently.

So then the trio swam off in that direction. They didn't know that Denman had moored her boat on the other side of Mako Island. Denman was already on her way over; she had seen them arrive on the scanner. She wanted to catch them in the act.

A/N: _Sorry its so short..._

11. Chapter 11

Chapter 11

Emma, Cleo and Rikki swam to the Moon Pool, enjoying their freedom. When they surfaced they relaxed against the steps.

"So, Cleo, how are your wedding plans going?" Emma asked casually.

"They're going good," she replied, "The wedding is set for next week, on the Saturday. We've organised the reception and everything and I have my wedding dress. We're pretty much set. The day after tomorrow I'll be moving in with Bella and Will, so that Lewis doesn't see me and all that, until the wedding day. I'm going to miss him so much," she gave them a small smile.

"Sorry to interrupt this lovely reunion," Denman said. She had crept silently in with a couple of her crew members. "I believe we didn't finish something last time."

The girls gasped,

"We thought you'd left!" Rikki exclaimed.

"Yes, well, an old trick, I knew you still had your secret" Denman said smugly.

The girls dived down to try and escape, but as they were talking, Denman's crew had grated and netted the cave entrance, sending the girls back to the surface. Rikki was about to suggest her plan to break out when Denman pulled out a Taser.

"Okay girls, before you do something you regret, let's talk." She paused, "First things first, get out of the pool, or my crew will pull you out!"

"That'd be nice; it is hard with tails!" Rikki interrupted.

Denman gestured to the crew to pull them out. The girls were heavier than they'd bargained for.

"Anyway," Denman continued, "Once you're dry we'll do a physical,"

The girls decided to play along, until the right moment to burst out. They were actually all a little curious to know more about their mermaid-ness. Rikki pretended she didn't have heating powers, so they had to lie on the cavern floor using the time-consuming air drying process

Denman's boat had been brought around nearer to the cave, and the crew members had ferried testing equipment in. Once everything was set up the tests were set up. There were blood tests and samples taken from the girls. Earlier Denman had splashed water on the girls to see how long their change took to take place. Again the long drying process took place. The girls were running on a treadmill each, to see how fit they were.

Back on the mainland, the guys, Bella and Anna had begun to get worried; it had been a few hours.

"We'll wait a little longer then go after them," Lewis suggested, "I'm sure their big enough to take care of themselves,"

"Very unusual!" Denman said to herself as she studied the blood samples. They had taken some from when they were mermaids and human. Both blood samples from each of the girls had a more complex structure than humans, and any doctor would be sure to spot the differences. These girls would have to be careful around hospitals.

Denman took down some notes.

Next she moved onto the skin and nail samples. Again their structure was different to that of humans. And as she had predicted and found out before the samples changed their molecular structure on contact with water. It looked to her like any children of these three would have the same cells; they looked like they would override the father's genes considerably. Again she wrote some more notes for her study.

As the doctor studied their samples, the girls decided they had had enough of playing around.

"I'm starving," Rikki complained.

"Shut it," one of their guards said,

"Okay okay," Rikki said

"We aren't' helpless anymore," Cleo whispered, the others nodded.

The Taser was in Denman's pocket. Rikki began slowly burning the circuitry inside the Taser, rendering it useless. She continued to do this to their guards' weapons. Denman of course didn't feel it heating up and cooling down again, she was too caught up in her research. The crew were also absorbed in what she was doing.

"On the count of three we'll throw our powers around, at them, and then we escape." Emma said quietly.

"Oneâ€| "

The girls broke the chains attached to their wrists with the powers, Rikki and Emma heating and cooling them so they snapped.

"Twoâ€| "

They got into a fighting stance, ready to immobilise their opponents.

"THREE!" Emma yelled and they began their attack.

Cleo formed a large water ball which Emma froze; it just missed one of their past guards.

Rikki threw a lightning bolt down the volcanic cone, knocking one of the guards unconscious.

"How is this possible?" Denman yelled

"We got an upgrade," Rikki said before throwing another bolt, narrowly missing another crew member.

A guard ran at Cleo she stopped him, blasting wind towards him pushing him backwards then lifting him up in the air. By now all the crew were trying to restrain the rogue mermaids.

They pulled out their dead Tasers, and obviously they didn't

work.

"ARG!" Denman cried as a tower of water poured over her.

Rikki was busy boiling the water around a guard, who had fallen into the moon pool; he was splashing round in panic.

"Rikki!" Emma yelled at her, "Stop, you've freaked him out enough as it is,"

Rikki lowered her arm.

Cleo raised a block of water around Denman's legs and Emma froze it, trapping Denman there.

A storm brewed above the island, throwing lightening down at Rikki's will.

Two of the crew were unconscious and the rest had run away from the cave, terrified of the powerful mermaids.

"No one messes with us." Rikki said to Denman, "Don't forget that,"

All the emotions that had been building up inside of Cleo finally got the better of her, in anger she sent a powerful gust of wind at the marine biologist knocking her against the wall, unconscious; A deep gash bleeding from her head.

"Oh no, what have I done!" Cleo exclaimed.

Just as she said this Will, Bella and Zane ran into the room, they had gotten very worried and divided into two groups to search for them.

"What happened?" Will said taking in all the carnage,

"Long story," Rikki replied, "Right now we need to get Denman to the hospital, she doesn't look so goodâ€|"

Cleo was next to Denman panicking, "What if I killed her!"

"You didn't, she'll be fine," Emma said assuring Cleo, but secretly she wasn't so sure she'd be fine.

"She is breathing, just unconscious," Rikki said, "That is some nasty bump, we still have a duty to her, to make sure she is safe, no matter what she has done to us" she commented.

Will began to think about how unlike Rikki this statement was, but then he took into account how much she had changed over past years.

They loaded her into Zane's zodiac, and Rikki, Bella and Zane headed back to the mainland to take her to hospital. The others began to round up the crew members; thankfully none of them had been seriously hurt. They promised never to spread their secret for fear of their lives. Cleo had never seen Emma so fearsome.

12. Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Hospital "the following morning|

"She is ready to accept visitors now|" a nurse said.

"Denman?"

The doctor was propped upright by pillows, her head bandaged.

"I have been told that is my name but|I don't remember everything is blurry," she paused almost squinting at Rikki, "Do I know you?"

"Yeah, were the|" Rikki began, Zane shoved her, and so she stopped and turned to him,

"She can't remember you or anything, this may be the break from her you guys were looking for," he whispered. She nodded catching the hint. She turned back to Denman.

"You are Dr Linda Denman, a marine biologist who is in the Gold Coast for fish counts and other such things, and we are the people who found you unconscious on your back, you must have had a fall, all your crew were on Mako Island surveying the area." Rikki lied, "but to refresh your memory our names are Rikki and Zane."

"I do recognise you though; you're very familiar, like I know you well..."

"That'd be because we saw each other every day at the docks, beach or my cafe," Rikki said quickly,

"Okay then," Denman smiled oblivious to past events.

"Times up" The nurse popped her head around the door, "Linda needs her rest,"

Once Rikki and Zane had left the room, in the hallway the nurse told them,

"Linda has severe amnesia,"

"That, we assumed," Rikki interrupted,

"She will probably never regain all her memories," the nurse continued ignoring Rikki's rude remark,

"The memories from the past few years may be gone for good."

Rikki grimaced; she hadn't known they had done that much damage at the moon pool the day before. Even so this was a great chance for the girls to be rid of the marine biologist for good; she couldn't help but feel guilty at this thought.

Rikki and Zane met up with the others back at their cafe. Everyone was very grim.

"How is she?" Cleo asked, very worried.

"Bad or good news?" Rikki asked the two tables of her friends

"Surprise me." Emma said

"Linda Denman has a bad bump on her head and a gash and has managed to acquire amnesia," Rikki replied, "But, the good news is that she can't remember anything at all, not even her own name, well she knows that now but still. This means that we probably will never have to worry about her again."

"The nurse said she may never regain the memories she has had within the past few years," Zane interrupted

"Yup, Just make sure we don't help trigger any memories for her," Rikki concluded with a half smile

The group weren't so glum after that but they did feel sorry for Denman. But she did deserve it â€“ right?

The days after that were quite quiet and uneventful, until the day of Cleo and Lewis' wedding...

13. Chapter 13

Chapter 13

Standing at the end of the isle in an old church, dressed in a tux, was Lewis McCartney, waiting for his bride to arrive. He checked his watch. She was already ten minutes late. Doubt crossed his mind.

"She'll be here mate," Zane said encouragingly. Zane, Will, Ash and Ben were his groomsmen.

This gave him a little more confidence. His Cleo would never abandon him, would she? No, of course not.

Just as he decided this the bridesmaids began their procession, piano music tinkling throughout the church. They were dressed in floral pink dresses, making them look amazing. Emma came first, then Bella, Anna followed by Rikki. For Rikki this was a rare event to see her in a floral dress, let alone pink, but she was beaming in support for her friends that were soon to be married.

As the bridesmaids passed the front row of Lewis and Cleo's relatives, their school and work friends in behind, Cleo entered the church. Lewis gasped; she was clad in a beautiful white dress, her hair in ringlets, holding a bouquet of red roses. She was beaming at Lewis as her father walked her down the aisle. Don had finally loosened his restraints on Cleo when it came to Lewis once they left school, making him agree in an instant when Lewis asked for his permission to marry Cleo. Don was also smiling proudly and he handed her over to his soonâ€“to-be son in law.

"You look wonderful Cleo," Lewis whispered in her ear. If it was

possible she smiled even wider.

The ceremony began.

"Speak now or forever hold your peace..."

Charlotte's head popped around the corner of the door to the church, obviously planning on 'speaking up' Rikki and Emma discreetly held the hands up in warning and Charlotte backed out of the door without fuss.

The vows and rings were exchanged. The rings brought up by her sister Kim; over the years Kim had matured and become closer to Cleo than ever before. In her last year of school Kim had been coming to Cleo for advice, mainly about her boyfriend Elliot (Yes, Emma's younger brother) and subject choices.

"I now pronounce you husband and wife, you may kiss the bride,"

They leaned in and shared a loving kiss, the guests all cheering.

"I now present to you Mr and Mrs Lewis and Cleo McCartney"

At the reception the friends all chatted and congratulations was offered to the newlyweds.

Of course Don had to make a speech and a couple of others just had to too.

Rikki stood up last.

"I have known Cleo now for, hmm, how long has it been? About seven years now, and I have to say, she is an amazing person and we have had the most amazing time together. I'm sure Emma and Bella would say the same thing." They nodded. Rikki continued, "Lewis also, is an amazing guy, annoying at times, but still he has always been there for us through ups and downs and many very very very..." Emma shook her head motioning to Rikki to stop, "Very strange events." Rikki concluded bluntly. "Anyway, they are amazing people and I couldn't ask for better friends,"

The night continued on, wining and dining and having fun.

Denman was not on anyone's' minds that evening.

In actual fact Denman had gone back to her home in Melbourne to live permanently with her husband. She resumed being a marine biologist, but tended to focus around Melbourne and didn't do much field work. She never did get her memory back fully. Conveniently all memory of the girls was erased. She was out of their lives for good.

The newlywed couple departed for their honeymoon the following morning. They were going to a resort somewhere in the gold coast. Lewis had organised it so that it would be a surprise for Cleo.

Meanwhile Bella and Will were planning the final details for their wedding which would take place in six weeks.

14. Updated Character Profile

**A/N- **Sorry about this, I'm confusing myself with the ages of the characters, so this is for clarification, just to get the gist of their ages. Sorry if it is slightly different to time in my story, I'm so confused and I'm the one writing it! _:P

**Updated Character Profiles (includes family members) â€“ **see background for more info. **_

_ (The month of June â€“ Ash, Lewis, Emma, Anna, and Will have had their birthdays)_

_ (2 years+ after first profile was done)_

**Bella â€“ **mermaid for 14 years, aged 23 (been with Will for 6 years)

**Cleo- **mermaid for 8 years, aged 23 (married to Lewis â€“ been with Lewis for 6 years plus a year of an on and off relationship)

**Rikki- **mermaid for 8 years, aged 23 (been with Zane for 4 years plus a year and a bit of on and off relationship)

**Emma- **mermaid for 8 years, aged 24 (been with Ash for 7 years)

**Ash- **aged 26

**Lewis- **aged 24

**Zane- **aged 24

**Will- **aged 24

**Anna- **mermaid for 2+ years, aged 24

Ben- merman for 2+ years, aged 24

**Kim- **Cleo's sister, aged 18 (birthday in September)

**Elliot- **Emma's brother, aged 18 (birthday in August)

15. Chapter 14

Chapter 14

_ A week later..._

As soon as Cleo arrived off the plane the girls bombarded her with questions Lewis was just chatting to the guys.

"It was perfect," was Cleo's answer.

Life got back to normal after that, the only difference was that Cleo was now Mrs McCartney. According to her, it took a lot of getting used to.

The mer-group resumed their frequent swims.

Cleo and Lewis' house ¯ a few weeks later....

"Lewis, I think it's about time I told my parents..." Cleo stated

"About what?" Lewis asked looking up from his research. She looked at him with her eyebrows raised. He soon got the hint.

"Oh..."

"Yeah"

"But Cleo, that's too dangerous, and what will the others think, especially Emma..."

"I'm 23 Lewis, I can look after myself, and besides I have you to protect me night and day, also I don't have to tell them about the others..." Cleo said firmly.

Lewis had no answer to this and the hard stare of his wife was too much.

"Fine," he said defeated, "You can tell them but you have to talk to the others first. I think this is a very bad idea,"

"Yes, Lewis dear." Cleo said. She said the word 'dear' with too much enthusiasm making Lewis feel mocked. She kissed him on the cheek. This made him feel much better.

"Have I ever told you I love you?" Cleo asked cheekily

Cleo rang everyone up and so they met at Rikki's cafe after work. (For Rikki and Zane it was during work, but still)

"So, I was thinking, maybe it's about time we spilt the secret to our parents..." Cleo said, "What do you guys think?"

It was so quite you could imagine crickets chirping, as they do in any awkward moment in films.

Um's and Ah's were heard from around the tables.

'No' was the unanimous decision, Cleo could not tell her parents, at least not yet.

"Fine!" Cleo replied stiffly, "I'll wait"

That night Cleo and Lewis were going to dinner with Cleo's family.

Cleo knocked on the door then let herself in, Lewis following.

"Dad, Sam, We're here!" Cleo called.

They went in and plonked down on the couch. Sam pooped her head out over the kitchen counter

"Good, you're here" she said smiling. Kim and Don came down the stairs to meet them.

The family exchanged their greetings and chatted; sharing the latest gossip and news before sitting at the dinner table to begin their meal.

"Who wants drinks?" Kim questioned her sister and brother-in-law.

Lewis asked for a water and Cleo for an orange juice. As Kim came back to the table with their beverages she tripped sending water all over Cleo and Lewis.

Cleo gasped and ran upstairs to her old bedroom. She toppled over in the doorway, her tail in the hall.

'This can't be happening' Cleo thought

Lewis was doing his best to stop her family from coming up stairs but to no avail. She heard footsteps of her father coming down the hall...

**A/N: **_Don't worry Zikki fans; there will be more of them coming soon. I had to focus more on Cleo and Lewis for the past few chapters for the sake of the story line. Bella and Will's wedding will be also coming soon. I have midyear exams coming up, so I may not be able to update as much, I'll try my best._

16. Chapter 15

Chapter 15

"Dad, I'm fine really," she said trying to get him to stop coming, she hear him continue.

"Dad, please don't freak out, please..."

He gasped as he took in her orange scaly tail.

"What...how...how is this even possible?" He asked different emotions displayed on his face, his eyes wide.

"It's a long story Dad..."

Kim, Sam and Lewis had now arrived. Kim's eyes widened and her jaw dropped. Sam was just mute with amazement. Lewis went and grabbed her a towel with which she dried herself, and her family saw her change. They all went back to the dinner table.

"You have a lot of explaining to do young lady,"

"You mustn't tell anyone Dad, all of you; you know what they'd do."

Reluctantly her family agreed to keep her secret.

"I didn't mean for you to find out this way, I had planned to tell you but was discouraged," Cleo said looking at Lewis.

"Anyway, I have been a mermaid for around eight years nowâ€|"

EIGHT YEARS!" Don cried indignantly

"Sorry," Cleo winced, "We, I mean 'I' have this amazing power," she continued after a brief pause. Lewis went and got a glass of water, knowing what she was about to demonstrate.

After it was placed on the table Cleo began moulding the liquid. First she moulded it into a tentacle, reaching to the ceiling, and then moulded it into a large ball moving it around in the air. Soon after she placed it back into the glass gently to lessen the splashing.

Her family were amazed. Lewis just smiled. Cleo led them outside; she caused the wind to blow extremely strongly.

"Are you doing that too?" Kim asked in awe

"Yup, she sure is," Lewis said proudly

"I knew I found something in that diary of yoursâ€|" Kim muttered

Once again seated around the table Cleo explained her story whilst eating their belated dinner. She left out information such as the fact that she wasn't the only one; that her friends were mermaid too. She just said that they had found out the secret a while back.

"I can see how you wanted to keep this secret so you could remain safe, but I wish you had told us. We would've kept your secret," Don said in a hurt voice, "Or at least I would," he looked at Kim.

"Hey"

"A lot of things make sense nowâ€|" Don continued

"Now I know why you always paid me to do the dishes, and always spent so long in the bathroom and â€|" Kim deciphered, "Hey, whenever my drink bottle or the sink exploded randomly into my face, that was you wasn't itâ€|" Kim asked

"Yeahâ€|ahâ€|sorry Kim" Cleo said sheepishly

"I can see I won't be getting away with that again" Cleo muttered

"What was that Cleo?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing..."

17. Chapter 16

Chapter 16

The Moon Pool â€" the next dayâ€|

The five mermaids and merman sat around the crowded moon pool, their tails collecting together in the centre.

"What was so urgent?" Emma asked casually

"Uhâ€|my parents found outâ€|" Cleo said in a small voice

"WHAT!" Rikki exclaimed

"I didn't exactly tell them; Kim spilt water on me at dinner last night and I couldn't get away in time. Don't worry they're not going to tell. Besides, when I told them all about my power, I didn't mention you guys at all, only that you know the secret."

They all breathed a sigh of relief.

"Thanks for protecting us," Anna said.

In the weeks after this event, every time Don and Cleo met up, he seemed a lot more protective. She had to assure him that she had been fine for over eight years numerous times.

Butterflies filled Bella's stomach as she woke up in the spare bedroom in Cleo and Lewis' house

Today was the day.

The sun shone down illuminating the bride as she walked down the aisle between the guests, the sand getting between her toes. Her light white dress was flowing gently in the breeze. It was a very casual wedding. Next to the celebrant, Will was standing, dressed casually in a light but tidy suit. Bella was beaming as she made her way nervously to the front. Her younger sister, Georgia, was the flower girl, sprinkling white rose petals onto the sand, just in front of Ellie, Bella's other younger sister; she was a bridesmaid, holding a bouquet of roses. It seemed like ages before she reached the end of her walk. She stood smiling next to her soon-to-be husband, butterflies coursing through her body.

"Do you take Isabella Louise Hartley to be your lawfully wedded wife?"

"I do,"

"Do you take William Carlos Benjamin to be your lawfully wedded husband?"

"I do," Bella said with enthusiasm.

They kissed and the small congregation of close friends and family cheered. Sophie had flown back from Perth for the wedding. Luckily she didn't make any disturbances and she was very happy for Will.

"What makes you happy makes me happy," she had said to the newlyweds.

The couple were going to go on their honeymoon to Fiji for a few weeks. Bella decided she'd be fine around the water there, and the two of them could take wonderful swims out on the reefs that no one

went to.

"Will, the water's beautiful!" Bella exclaimed looking longingly at the water.

"We'll go out there later, Bella," Will said kissing her, "But we've gotta check in first,"

"Alright then," She followed dutifully taking his hand.

18. Chapter 17

Chapter 17

Somewhere in the Ocean, a few days later...

Anna and Ben swam hand in hand manoeuvring quickly in loop de loops and other mermaid swim patterns. Zane and Ash were leaning over the side of Zane's boat talking to their girlfriends. Lewis and Cleo were swimming slowly together, Lewis in his scuba gear looking painfully bulky next to his slim mermaid wife who was gliding smoothly through the water.

After a few more hours of swimming and resting in the boat and in Mako Island's moon pool, they all decided to go back to the secret beach for a picnic.

Rikki and Cleo had packed that picnic earlier and trusted it to Zane in the boat. They were both very surprised that nothing was missing.

"Is this safe?" Lewis asked cautiously looking at Rikki.

"Hey!" Rikki said giving him the evil eye.

He quickly began to eat the sandwich in question.

There was ginger beer, sandwiches, and baking, and anything else you can imagine.

"They had really gone all out," as Anna would put it, "It was a pity that Will and Bella weren't there."

They ate, laughed and chatted. After a while Zane asked Rikki if they could go somewhere private so they could talk.

Cleo gave her a confused look. Rikki just shrugged and got up to go with Zane. After walking a good distance from the group, Zane stopped and turned to Rikki.

"Shoot" she said to him.

Suddenly he kissed her; she was taken by surprise and took a step back.

"Are you in love with me?" Zane asked with a worried tone in his voice.

"Of course I love you, I've told you this before," Rikki replied

puzzled.

Zane seemed to relax for a second. He took her hands.

"Rikki, I have been doing some thinking, and I've come to the conclusion that I can't live without you," He babbled

"Zane, spit it out, speak like a normal person," Rikki told him.

"...okay..." He breathed then dropped to one knee.

A scream rang out.

"That's Rikki!" Cleo exclaimed, the group scrambled up in the direction of where they saw Zane and Rikki go.

Meanwhile...

After she screamed she stood there motionless, her jaw hanging open. Zane was mortified. His hopeful face turned into a frown and he looked down. Recovering from her shock she reached out her hand and turned his disappointed face back to her.

"Yes" she said softly

"What?" Zane asked; the light coming back into his eyes.

"You heard me; I'm not gonna say that again."

He beamed at her and pulled her into a kiss before hugging her tightly and spinning her round as if she were as light as a feather.

She returned his smile and laughed.

"Oh, I almost forgot something," Zane said. He pulled out a ring.

"That is one very large rock," Rikki stated. Normally she would've told him to keep anything like this, but since it symbolised his love for her, she didn't make any protest and he slipped the ring onto her finger.

Just at this moment the couple's friends ran into the clearing.

"Are you okay?" Emma asked before taking in the situation.

"Yeah...I'm absolutely fine as you can see..."

"Oh, but we heard a scream," Anna said.

"Oh," Rikki turned the same colour as her shirt, "Yeah..."

Once they found out that the two of them were engaged, congratulations were offered and everyone was very surprised.

"I didn't know that Zane was so committed," Lewis murmured to Cleo. She just shrugged.

19. Chapter 18

Chapter 18

"So you really do love me?" Rikki asked in a small voice.

"Of course I love you, what does that ring say?"

"I know, I know, it's just you were never the committed type..."

"Don't underestimate me Rikki; I can be committed and sensitive if I want to," He kissed her gently.

"In that case," Rikki said brightening up, "How can I turn down your most generous offer,"

"What offer?"

Rikki rolled her eyes at him while smiling.

"Oh! Oh!"

She kissed him.

The Engagement Party was a big bash. They had reserved their cafe for the event. Zane had invited his friends and Rikki had inviting the group and a couple of others, including her father. Terry was very happy with Zane being the one Rikki was to marry. Since they had got back together and he saw that Zane was sincerely sorry for the hurt he had caused his daughter, they had no conflict.

At one point Zane and Rikki went off together and none had seen them since. Cleo and Emma went looking, leaving their boyfriends by themselves.

Rikki and Zane were making out in the corner of the manager's office. Cleo walked in on this and quickly backtracked bumping into Emma.

"I think we can say they won't be out here for a while..." Cleo said with a sly smile on her face.

Emma caught the hint; "Tell them to get a room," she exclaimed.

"Emma, they are in a room..."

"Oh, right..."

Meanwhile at the Fiji Resort...

"It's a pity that we are missing Rikki's engagement party," Bella said to Will. An excited Rikki and co had called the couple to tell them the news.

"Yeah, but it is our honeymoon," Will said. He kissed her.

Will hired a boat and went out to sea for a midnight swim with Bella.

She jumped out of the boat, and waited for her husband to join her.

One Night many weeks later â€“ Bella and Will have returned from their honey moon. Ash and Emma's house in the country....

"Ash...do you love me?" Emma asked self-consciously,

"Yes, Emma, of course I do!" Ash attempted to kiss her, but she pulled away, he looked at her question in his eyes.

"Well, it's justâ€|"

"Emma, just say it," Ash said expecting the worst,

"Wellâ€|It just seems that you don't want to make a commitment," Emma said cautiously

"I don't understandâ€|" Ash said. A brief pause followed.

"Ash, I want to marry you!" Emma blurted out.

"Did I hear that correctly?"

"Yes" Emma said not meeting Ash's eyes.

He lifted her chin and kissed her gently.

"I will marry you someday. I'm just not ready yet sweetheart" He explained to her.

20. Chapters 19 and 20

Chapter 19

Another Few weeks later at Cleo and Lewis' house....

There was a frantic knock at the door.

"Have you seen Rikki?" Zane asked frantically as soon as Cleo opened the door. Zane had come here first because it was closest out of his friends to the cafe. "She didn't come home last night; she went out to close the cafe up but never came back,"

Cleo had never seen Zane so stressed; she tried to calm him down.

"No we haven't seen Rikki, but I'm sure she'll be fine. Zane; it's okay, breathe," Cleo instructed.

Lewis had now come down to the door, still in his pyjamas. He was wiping sleep out of his eyes.

"What's up?"

"Rikki is missing," Cleo replied to her husband worriedly,

"Did you look for her?" he asked Zane pointedly

This received him a light slap on the arm from Cleo.

"Yes, of course I did!" Zane said in a voice that was irritated but still troubled.

The three of them raced out of the house once Lewis was dressed to search for Rikki.

On the way Cleo called everyone else. Anna and Ben were still waking up, but Bella and Will had already gone for their morning jog, and Emma and Ash were just about to go out the door.

They met up at the cafe, and then split up again to go out in search for the missing Rikki.

"Rikki, Rikki!"

The guys were looking on the streets, cafes, shops and friends' houses, while the girls were scouting the ocean and Mako Island. After meeting up numerous times, in the afternoon where everywhere close by was searched, they met up for a final time in the closed Cafe. Zane decided to close it until Rikki was found.

"Nothing,"

"Same. Where could she be?"

Chapter 20

Rikki's P.O.V_

I woke up in complete darkness, in a cold, damp room, which was causing me to shiver. I only had my thin red sweatshirt on, which was not keeping out the chill of the room. Something was pressing against my eyes, keeping me from seeing. A disgusting taste flooded my mouth as I regained my full consciousness. A dirty rag was acting as a gag, which really was as I had to make a lot of effort not to gag and reel at the smell and taste of that putrid rag. My head was ringing. It felt as if my head had been run over by a steam train. I tried to move my hands and legs but they are stuck fast. Ropes burn my wrists. I try to scream but the gag muffles it. I was sure that I was just leaving the cafe a second earlier. Oh, that's right. I was leaving, but just as I began my walk home, a couple of thugs grabbed me and must have knocked me out.

"The Sleeping Beauty's awake" A gruff voice comes to my ears. I mumble something incoherent. They lifted the blindfold. Searing light entered my eyes, forcing them closed. As I get accustomed to the light, my eyes widen at seeing my captor, or at least, seeing who my captor is.

He removed the fetid gag slowly, while saying, "Don't bother screaming, no one will hear you down here,"

So we are down, well that is some news.

"You can't keep me here!" I said doing a convincing job in keeping the fear out of my voice. I think I did a pretty good job, considering.

"Ha. That's what they all say."

"What are you going to do to me?" I demanded

"Oh, I don't know, keep you in solitary, starve you, who knows? I think we'll decide on the way," He said with a chuckle, "Ay boys?" he turns to his motley crew of thugs. "Besides, this is just revenge for putting us away,"

"Hey, I was just trying to get reimbursed," I interrupted, "People will begin to look for me soon," I continued after a pause.

"They'll never find you here," He chuckled evilly and left the room, his thugs following close behind. All the lights were turned off but a single dim lamp in the far corner of the room.

Now that they were gone, I took in my surroundings. Cold walls encircled me, condensation caused by my body heat glinting. There were no windows to be seen, and no items except for that dim lamp, and a grate in the wall above the bolted door. A water pipe ran from above the door to the end of the room behind me. I have to say craning my neck backwards isn't the easiest thing in the world. It was bound to have water flowing through; maybe I could use this in my escape attempt.

The last time I had seen that man was on my 18th birthday. Wow, that was ages ago. But I never could forget that face. That was the day when I was trapped on a burning boat; the day with the counterfeiters. They had been caught and put in prison. Maybe they blamed me for being caught.

Hmm, what to do about being trapped...

I curled my fists in frustration. Unintentionally I must have heated the water up, 'cos the pipes began to jiggle.

"Ahh" I heard one of the men scream. Oopsy; must have burnt someone.

What are they going to do to me?

Better not wait to find out...

21. Chapter 21

Chapter 21

Meanwhile her friends were at Emma and Ash's house discussing what to do next. Zane called the police

"What is your emergency?"

"My fiance has gone missing, we searched everywhere for her. Shes been gone a night and a day." Zane said frantically.

The group kept their eyes out incase they saw Rikki returning home. The police wouldnt do a proper search until it was confirmed she was missing, that she wasn't still on her way. So pretty much if she was

still gone the next day, they would start their search. The group found it very unhelpful. Her phone was off. (Rikki's captors had taken it off her, learning from the last time) This made everything more suspicious.

Unknown Location where Rikki is being held against her will, 48 hours later...

Rikki's P.O.V

There it goes again. My stomach has been rumbling nonstop for the past few days. At least I think its been a few days. The man's workers have brought me a drink of stale water three times since I woke up. I guess this is to keep me alive and awake, feeling the hunger and loneliness. I had always been a loner before I met Cleo and Emma, before I became a you-know-what, this silence shouldnt be bothering me. But then I guess I always had my dad to talk to when I got home, and there was always noise about me, not this dead silence. No noise except for my ragged breathing and shivering and the occasional clatter and footstep from outside my prison. Oh, its so damn cold! If I don't starve to death, I think I might freeze.

As you can see with all this time on my hands and had quite a bit of time to contemplate life and think and plan my escape...

_No one in particular's P.O.V (normal perspective) _

"She's been awful quite over the past few days Rodney. I'd have thought she'd at least be screaming for food, crying or begging us to let her out...the loneliness and the cold would've got to me by now," One man said. All the men there were convicted fellons, most of them had recently fulfilled their sentence and had promised falsely to keep on the side of the law. Most of them had been part of the counterfeiting ring or thugs. During theirrough five years imprisonment their leader had been doing a lot of thinking. Most of it regarding who was responsible for locking them away. They decided as a group, thier leader obviously with the most input, that it was that pretty teenage girl with the blonde curly hair and striking blue eyes. She would be their target when they left prison.

The police, satisfied that she was infact missing began to help with the search by beginning an investigation. They also helped with the placement of 'Missing' posters. The face of a very cheerful Rikki was pastered on poles and in shop windows and billboards all over town. Over the two days the friends had been beside themselves with worry. The mermaids would go for extra long swims incase they could find her. Zane was in the worst state. Noone had ever seen him this way before. It was terribly out of character for him.

"Its all my fault," he would mumble to himself, "If I had gone to the cafe with her or instead of her she'd probably be safe and still with us now,"

"Have you seen this girl?" A police officer asked the manager of the petrol station holding up her photo.

"Hmm," he said thoughtfully, "Actually, yes. I think I have...there was this ute who came to buy petrol. You could see a girl of this description in the back, asleep...the men with her said she had fallen asleep on the way home, it was very suspicious..."

"Could you give us a description of those men?"

"I'll see what I can do..."

22. Chapter 22

Chapter 22

Rikki's P.O.V

It's now or never. Let's try something.

I spat on the ropes on my wrists. Using my power on the water, it cooked the ropes; steam rose up into my face. Ow, that hurts. I grimace silently, as the spit evaporates leaving the ropes weakened. Opening my tightly clenched fists, I jerk my hands up quickly, breaking the ropes. I free my feet. Ow, my wrists really hurt now. Rope **and** water burn - Way to go Rikki!

I get up from my chair as silently as possible.

Oh no! My muscles are so stiff; my joints click as I make my way painfully to the large metal door. I peep through the key hole. Good, piece of cake, easy lock to pick. I reach up to get a bobby pin from my hair. Damn! I forgot about the bolt. I sit down defeated. Ooh! I know. I'll wait for them to bring in my daily drink. They will open the door for me. I smile, my eyes sparkling. Genius, Rikki good plan, you're a genius. Once they've opened the door for me, I'll escape, boiling those who get in my way. Yes. I'm sorted. Just have to make the rest up on the way; for my desperate dash for freedom. Oh dear Rikki, when did you get so crazy, having arguments with yourself. Hmm, maybe it was when I was trapped in a silent, cold room for two days. Okay, self, stop arguing with me! Oh dear. I wonder if I'm a loony.

I waited for about half an hour. I didn't have a watch or other technological device, so I'm not exactly sure how long, but it felt like ages.

The door opened. Yes! This is my moment. I pushed the door hard; it hit a hard object with a bang. Hell, I hope no one hear that... The man was on the floor unconscious. Perfect. Some of the stale water miraculously managed to remain in the cup. It barely managed to satisfy my unbearable thirst. I searched his pockets for anything useful. Hmm, a key. That would most definitely be useful. I gasp silently; a half eaten chocolate bar. I gulp it down, but it doesn't satisfy my ravaging hunger. Ooh, a pocket knife, well this would certainly help me in my escape. I push that guard out of the door way to the corner of the room, and then pop my head around the door. There is a singular guard in the dimly lit corridor. Good. I start to heat his blood up slowly. He starts to sweat, and then passes out. I drag him into the cell I was held in. Too easy. I shut the door quietly behind me, bolting it shut. I crept down the hall. I take my slip on shoes off and leave them out of the way to make my movement silent. I power-walked down the hall, my muscles protested but I kept going. I came to some stairs. Okay. They had said we were down. The basement perhaps? There still aren't any windows. I look around me nervously and then race up the stairs.

Behind me I hear voices, they must have figured out I have escaped the cell.

I hear steps coming in my direction; this makes me quicken my pace. I see a guard coming towards me; it's a good thing that I know hand to hand combat. Living in the poorer parts of town with a whole bunch of bikers lets you pick up a lot of stuff. I ducked under his badly placed punch and quickly kicked him in the groin. This rendered him helpless, rolling around on the floor in pain. What alerted the other guards was his colourful language. Boy, did he need to have his mouth washed out. I ran quickly up another set of stairs, then another searching for an exit. I passed lots of doors and corridors with the guards on my tail. When I reached four floors up from my prison, some thugs stood in my way. I can't believe my luck. There are a few canisters of water beside one of the doors in the corridor. I began to boil the water, backing away from them, acting as if I was helpless. The water burst the canisters spraying all over the daunting men. They cried out in pain, giving me the momentum to rush past them as they were nursing their burns. Finally- windows; I can see blue sky; this means I can probably escape soon. There is no way I'll get to a door outside without being caught. I look out the nearest window. That's not such a bad drop...

As I looked out of the window across the landscape I realised I had no idea where I was. I could be on the other side of Australia for all I knew. Oh well, better get out first. I'll think about this later. I launched myself at the window, expecting for it to shatter...it didn't, I bounced straight back off it. DAMN! I try again, and then a third time. This time I break through, I feel myself falling down, down, down, it felt like slow-motion the sensation of stinging of small cuts made by the glass in my consciousness. I turn trying to get myself in the best position for impact. I hit the ground with a thud.

OW! I cry out in pain. That was more than just ground shock. Better. Get. Up. Can. Not. Get. Caught. I scrambled up ignoring the pain, not looking back I limp off in a random direction that I hope spells freedom and safety.

**A/N: Review, review, review **

23. Chapter 23

Chapter 23

I hear an engine behind me; no! I try to run faster, I turn around and see the two black 4x4s coming closer ominously, I see the two story building that I had escaped from behind it. There must be many floors of basement, their secret headquarters inconspicuous among similar shaped buildings spread far apart in the rural area. They are gaining on me. Oh, I have an idea.

I stop suddenly, and turn to face the oncoming cars. I raise my hand.

Bang!

I used my powers to pop their tyres one after another. I continue

running off, the pain in my ankle overwhelmed by adrenaline so that I don't feel it as much.

Is that a mirage? No, it can't be. Wait- I think it is real. Is that a river? I can't believe my luck; things couldn't be easier in outmanoeuvring my captors. I change direction, heading towards the large expanse of water. I dive in and with a flick of my tail, speed away to who knows where. As long as I'm safe I don't care where I'm going.

_No one in particular's P.O.V (normal perspective) _

"Where did she go?" Rikki left behind some very confused thugs.

Meanwhile...

The police had some leads as to where the missing girl and her captors were. The captors were currently still searching for Rikki, but everyone else didn't know she had escaped.

The mermaids had decided to swim to take their minds off the worry â€“ it didn't do such a great job, but it was better than sitting around on land. Ben decided to comfort Zane along with the rest of the guys; Zane was still very much out of character.

Rikki was swimming quickly down a large river towards civilisation, away from her captors. They would never find her.

Rikki's P.O.V

I swam and swam until I came to a bridge â€“ I think I am safe, I'm definitely at civilisation. I swim back the way I came until I think I'm out of the highly populated area. I pop my head out of the water; there are a few houses along the water front. No one is there. I swim cautiously to the shore, pulling myself onto the sun warmed sand, and drying myself quickly behind some trees, hoping to obscure any curious eyes from finding out my secret. I think this is the quickest dry I've done.

I got up and hobbled down the street, all of my adrenaline gone, the state of my body kicking in.

I stumbled slowly, one foot after another. I've got to find help. I've got to get home. I willed myself along. I came across a dairy, which of course I entered.

**A/N: **_*for those who don't know, a 'dairy' is a corner shop/store. It is the term for it in NZ.*_

The Dairy Shopkeeper's P.O.V

I hear the ding-dong of the shop door as someone enters. I look up briefly from my book. It had been a slow day, and I had allowed myself some downtime. It took all my effort to stop myself gasping at the sight I saw in front of me.

There was a young woman, probably in her early twenties with curly blonde hair tied loosely in two plaits. It looked like it hadn't been brushed in days. She was extremely pale and her shirt had numerous

rips, all various sizes in it. Cuts, some deep and some shallow, littered her face, neck and hands. She was limping as she made her way slowly and faintly to the counter.

Just as she reached the counter, she buckled and fell over, toppling into one of the shelves. She looked as if she had been wrestling with lions.

I bolted up and made my way to the young girl who was now on the floor.

"Wake up, please wake up..." I muttered to myself.

Her eyelids fluttered and her eyes opened little while later. She sat up slowly.

"Where the hell am I?" she demanded weakly. I found this remark rude, but didn't say anything.

"You're in Grafton, New South Wales..."

Her eyes widened.

"Wow, at least that's not exactly on the other side of the country" I heard her mutter to herself.

"What's your name, and what on earth happened to you!" I asked softly

"I'm Rikki," she managed to choke out, "And I just managed to escape my captors. I was kidnapped three or four days ago," she looked like she was going to pass out again,

"I haven't eaten in that whole time," she said weakly as if answering my puzzled expression.

"Oh my goodness!" I hadn't realised I was staring.

What should I do? I can't be a cold hearted woman and let her die, should I give her something, some charity?

I would simply call the police and they would know what to do.

"I'm going to call the police and an ambulance," I said to the girl "Rikki, "What was your full name darling?"

"Rikki Chadwick," she said hoarsely, still collapsed on the floor.

I dialled 000, and waited.

"What is you're emergency?"

"Oh, hi, I have a girl in my store claiming to be a 'Rikki Chadwick', she says she was kidnapped... she is in a very bad way..."

_No one in particular's P.O.V (normal perspective) _

The police and an ambulance came to the little dairy in Grafton. The shopkeeper explained her side of the story whereas Rikki was in such a bad way the raced her to the hospital. The interrogation of what

had happened would have to wait.

**A/N: **_*Keep reviewing thanks *_

24. Chapter 24

Chapter 24

The Hospital, the next day...

The girl in the hospital bed had been bandaged up and was currently reguvenating back to health, a drip was in her arm flowing the nutrients she had been denied over her time in captivity. She had been asleep for a straight day and hadn't been up to visitors until now. Rikki's leg was in a plaster cast; apparently she had broken her ankle and fractured her cuneiform bone when she had jumped from the window. All the running she had done on it had made it worse.

She sat up against her pillows groggily as the door burst open.

Zane came bursting in, followed slowly by the others.

"Rikki! How are you feeling, are you okay? What did they do? I thought I'd lost you," Zane exclaimed as he rushed over to her bedside.

"Aw, did you?" She said sarcastically. She softened after this and gushed, "I missed you too," Anyone could tell that she was very glad to see him and the kissed lovingly.

"It's good to have you back," Zane said

"Hey Rikki, how you felling?" Cleo said as she walked over to the bed.

"A lot better thanks, I'm still sore but yeah,"

"You should have seen how out of his mind Zane was with worry for you," Anna said to Rikki, Zane blushed sheepishly.

"Aw, Zaney boy missed me," Rikki said ruffling his hair.

"Anyway, how did you do this?" Emma asked gesturing to her leg

"Ah...I jumped out a window..."

Rikki told the others about her daring escape and what had happened.

The Police Interrogation after Rikki had been released from hospital (her vitals back to normal)...

"What happened?"

"I was walking home..."

"Details please?" asked the young officer interrupting,

"Fine. I was walking casually back from the cafe that me and my fiance have partnership in, to our two story house five minutes from the cafe on the waterfront..."

"Not that many details,"

"Hey, just doing what was asked of me, did you change your mind?" Rikki said

"Yes. Just get on with it," The officer said in defeat.

"Okay then, anyway I was kidnapped; I think they used chloroform or something on me, as I woke up with a thumping headache tied to a chair. U was kept in that cold room for three days, given no food or warmth, and one drink of water a day. I managed to escape by," she paused as if collecting her thoughts, "breaking the ropes and jumping out a window a few stories up from my prison cell and then I ran for miles and miles after their 4x4's tyres popped mysteriously, ending up in that dairy in Grafton." Rikki had paused because she couldnt exactly tell them that she had used mermaid powers to escape.

"Miss Chadwick do you have any idea where you were held that may help us in finding them?"

"Nope,"

"Could you tell me how you got so far if you had broken your ankle?" he said gesturing to her cast

"Ah, I guess you could say it was adrenaline, officer,"

Weeks later they had found the counterfeiters-gone-kidnappers and arrested the lot. Rikki and the others were happily united and Zane would not let Rikki out of his sight until he finally felt assured that she wasnt about to disappear again any time soon.

Rikki hobbled around on her crutches earning herself blisters, so Zane made sure she stayed in the manager's office rather than have her do much work. The group often found Rikki trying to leave as she felt useless, but they managed to keep her " somehow, maybe because she liked the attention.

Since Rikki had broken her ankle and fractured her foot, when she first tried to swim she couldnt. Her tail finwould barely budge, but when it did it would hurt a lot. When she examined her tail on 'their beach' her left side of her tail fin looked rather bent and there were a few scales missing further up. It turned out that she couldnt swim at all until she was healed. Since Rikki couldnt swim, this made her **very** irritable. Zane just put up with this like a good boyfriend. He was just happy she was safe and sound, back with him, oh and with the others of course.

Other than Rikki recovering from her injuries, everything went back to normal.

When Rikki's skin healed there remained large scars where the deepest cuts were on her face. As she would put it; 'it was a permanent memory of the event that she would have with her for ever,'

25. Chapter 25

Chapter 25

6 weeks later...

Rikki was leaning against Zane's solid frame as they walked down the beach. Anyone could see the limp she walked with. Zane was carrying Rikki's and his own jandals.

**A/N: **_*For those who have no kiwi terminology at all; a jandal is a flip flop in kiwi land, or a 'thong'- isn't that underwear...strange people...*_

"So..." Zane began

"Yeah?"

"I became real love sick when you were gone"

"Yeah, you did," Rikki laughed,

"It means I can't live without you," he said in serious tone, "I love you Rikki."

After a long silence Zane spoke again.

"About the wedding..."

"Yeah?"

"I think we should start planning. Do you want white or simple?"

"Wedding aren't really my scene. I can try though..."

"So, white?"

She scrunched up her nose.

"Simple it is. I don't really mind as long as I get to marry you,"

"Aw that's sweet," Rikki said and they kissed lovingly.

Cleo's and Ben's birthdays had passed by without mishap as Rikki recovered. Her first swim after ages of having a broken ankle and tail was an event she would always remember. The thrill of the water rushing past as she flicked her almost fully powerful tail.

The 1st of October arrived.

Rikki's P.O.V

I woke up, my eyes still half closed and groggily looked around, I felt the bed beside me â€“ Zane was gone. He came in holding a tray of my favourite breakfast, toast covered in nutella with sliced banana on it.

"You didn't."

"Oh, I did, and I'm not going away with it. I'm going to make this day wonderful for you no matter what you do."

Wow, he really sounded passionate.

"I guess I can try,"

He placed the food on my lap and then got into the bed beside me.

"Happy...whatever Rikki,"

I smiled. It took me a lot of effort but I managed to say, "Thank you,"

He took me to the movies and then out for lunch, leaving the cafe in the capable hands of our staff. For dinner we went to Lewis' secret fishing spot which within our group we had renamed 'Our beach'.

A picnic rug was set out and it had an array of food placed on it. There was a lot of chocolate — my favourite.

As we sat down on the soft sand I heard, "Surprise," It gave me an almighty fright and I nearly shrieked but stopped myself just in time.

"You shouldn't have," I said when they brought out the gifts. Zane gave me a new ipod touch to replace one that was taken off me when I was kidnapped, and a beautiful red necklace. Cleo and Bella gave me another mermaid statue to add to my collection. Though it wasn't voiced, I really did appreciate and like the ornaments. They had given me one every year since the first, each in a different pose. Everytime I said 'Thankyou' to the others, it obviously meant a lot, as they always seeme to brighten. Am I that hard to please?

Emma gave me a collection of mango juice icy pops — which I loved. They were SO delicious. She knew me too well. Everyone else got me assorted small gifts as they knew I wouldn't accept anything big.

"Thankyou guys," I said to them, huggin them all. They were suprised by this gesture, I could tell — but hey! Who cares right?

A/N: _ **As to the nutella and banana thing — it is actually really really good. I have uploaded this...I'm very naughty — I have exams in a few days...oh well...:P**_

26. Chapter 26

Chapter 26

A boatyard...About a month later...

"Please, please Rikki, please with a cherry on top! Just let me! It'll be a early birthday present" Zane begged like a little boy. She rolled her eyes.

"Fine, have your toy boat, but remember its not coming out of my

money...or the cafe's for that matter..." She didn't get to finish as she found his lips against hers.

Another while later....

The group of friends decided to go and camp on Mako Island for a week. Everyone miraculously got to take the week off except for Bella. She managed to rearrange three days however and would come and camp every night after work. Anyway, they were going to explore and swim and basically just have a fun time. They packed all their stuff into Zane's new boat. The mermaids swam over and met the rest of the guys on the beach to help carry their stuff to the campsite. They spent the best of the afternoon scouting out a good campsite and pitching their tents. This week in particular was forecast to be sunny all week, perfect for the mermaid campers.

To get to their ideal spot there was a river to cross. The girls and Ben hesitated at this, they didn't really want to transform then have to dry themselves. Bella, learning from last time, handed her pack to Will, then created very large stepping stones to get across with. Fortunately everyone passed over safely; except for Cleo. Bella was talking to Will about the first time they were on the island together, and why she didn't come to the water till Rikki arrived. This caused Bella to lose her concentration releasing the gelatine rocks just as Cleo went to take her next step "right in the middle of the river. This sent Cleo splashing in. It was lucky to have Anna and Rikki there; they quickly dried her off and the group went on their way again.

They arrived at the clearing that was going to be their home for the next week. There were four tents, each sleeping around three.

****Sleeping Arrangements:****

#1: Rikki, Anna and Bella

#2: Cleo and Emma

#3: Zane and Ben

#4: Will, Lewis and Ash

Each tent was pitched quite close together with space for a campfire in the centre. Each tent door faced towards the campfire. For dinner they had baked beans and sausages on toast (**A/N: Watties all the way) **then went to sleep. It had been a long day.

****A/N: **_**Hey guys, turns out I have a day off tomorrow (no exams till the next day, so expect another few chapters.) Keep reviewing. I'm trying to get like 40 reviews by chapter 30. Anyway, thanks for reading, I'll update ASAP :P **_**

P.S: sorry this one was so short...****

27. Chapter 27

****Chapter 27****

The next morning...

When Anna woke up Bella was one and Rikki was still fast asleep, her face mashed against the pillows. The sun's rays were peaking through the open zip of the tent. It was a beautiful spring morning.

"Rikki" Anna shook her sleeping form. Rikki groaned and batted at her arm before turning over and burying her face deeper into the pillows she had brought.

Anna got dressed then left the tent. She heard chatter coming from the girl's tent next to her own. She unzipped it to find Emma and Cleo very much awake.

"You guys know where Bella is?"

Cleo shrugged. Emma said, "Maybe she went for a walk" she always does that early mornings"

"Hey, do you wanna make breakfast with me?"

They trio got up and started their gas cookers. They had brought camping toasters (the ones you put over the gas that cooks the toast) and plastered them with vegemite to give to the group. They also opened a tin of spaghetti " of course with the sausages. The smells of cooking arose the guys and Rikki " they all came out of their tents looking hungrily to find the source of the delicious smells. Bella and Will returned from their morning walk.

Their first day on Mako was full of swimming and exploring. They relaxed on the rocks, their tales dangling into the water. Emma and Ben had a sculpture making competition. Emma obviously needed Cleo's help. She drew in the sand what she wanted Cleo to mould so she could freeze it. Bella joined in too, saying she could create sculptures just as well as them, getting Anna to mould the water for her. Each team made huge sculptures mostly in the shape of mermaids but also in the shapes of various animals. Rikki felt kinda left out so occasionally she would melt a sculpture or two until Zane took her away.

"Ahh"

The girls burst into giggles,

"Shot Rikki,"

Zane heard them and came towards them his face like a bull's " all red and angry.

"That was not funny."

"Yes it was- hilarious actually!" Rikki laughed at his expressions.

"I'll get you back for this," Zane told his joking fiance

"Never!" And Rikki took off with Zane on her tail.

Rikki had placed a large grass snake in Zane and Ben's tent " more specifically Zane's sleepingbag. Her plan had succeeded.

The next night after a tiring day of fun, fishing and swimming, there was a surprise to be found in girls' tents.

Cleo caught herself before she screamed. In her bed was a bird eating spider. She backed away slowly. Little did she know that the guys had killed it before putting it in her bed: they had done the same to Bella, Anna and Emma.

"Please get it out, please," she whimpered to Lewis

Lewis had no idea about the pranking affair and went to investigate.

He poked it with a very, very long stick hesitantly. It didn't move.

"Cleo, it's dead,"

"Really...oh,"

"Yeah, no need to panic,"

"Thanks for checking Lewis," she gave him a peck on the cheek.

Lewis went around to check the other girls' beds. As expected each had a dead spider- except Rikki's.

"That's very odd..." Lewis mused to himself.

Rikki's P.O.V

Later that night...

I wonder what's in my bed. The girls told me what they found in theirs. I unzip the tent and step inside. Haha, looks like they forgot to put anything in my sleeping bag...unless they've put it deep inside. I slipped my hand inside feeling around for something dead.

No way. They didn't.

Normal Perspective

"Ow!" Rikki exclaimed

Everyone rushed into the tent to see what had happened. Zane and the guys burst out laughing and slapped each other high fives. There was Rikki a tail sticking out the tent doorway staring daggers at them. She started drying herself off and the others went back to sit around the campfire- still laughing.

Suddenly a lightning bolt struck the ground between Ash and Zane; they were the masterminds. This stopped their laughter. Rikki blew the end of her finger as if she had shot a gun.

"Serves you right," Rikki said, the other girls laughing along with her.

"No fair,"

28. Chapter 28

Chapter 28

On the last day they decided to play Waterpolo and Beach Volleyball.

**Team 'Ice': **Emma, Ben, Bell, Ash and Will

**Team 'Hotstuff': **_(Rikki named it) _Rikki, Anna, Zane, Lewis and Cleo.

In the middle of the waterpolo Cleo playfully splashed Emma with her tail. Emma however took this as a fun challenge. With Ben's help she sent an ice ball towards Cleo.

"Oh, its on!" Rikki said.

The water polo game erupted into a full out power fight. The guys the humans decided to leave the water and get out of the way "to safety. They relaxed on the beach watching their girlfriends and bestfriend have a play fight. Pretty much every fun blow was counteracted by the opposite team. Rikki refrained from using her lightning power as she could electrocute them all. After a while Anna and Ben left the water leaving the original four mermaids play fighting. They were a lot more 'fit' with their powers (they didn't get tired as fast.) The others stayed sunbathing on the beach, Anna and Ben letting the sun dry them. They soon all came out of the water exhausted. They lay on the beach their tails in the sun.

"We totally won," Rikki announced. This earnt her a frozen water tentacle coming her way. She quickly lefted her hand and melted it.

"Hey," she exclaimed, "Talk about sore losers!"

That afternoon they packed up their gear and put it in Zane's boat.

Before they left they had the Volleyball game. This time there was different teams as to prevent a war again.

**Team 1 (The water movers) **Cleo, Anna, Ben, Lewis, Will

**Team 2 (Everyone else) **Rikki, Emma, Bella, Ash, Zane,

Luckily this game was just fun and nothing more happened.

Another month passed including Bella's birthday...

2nd of January _

"Happy birthday mate,"

"Guys remember to lock yourselves in tonight; its a full moon," Lewis said before they departed the cafe after Ash's birthday lunch.

"Yes, yes Lewis, don't you think we have this all down packed by now?

Its been so many years! We havn't been moon struck for at least tow. Besides we have our partners to look afte us,"

_Later that day...Emma and Ash's house....

"Happy Birthday Ash," Emma said kissing him.

"Emma, I really want to go out with my other friends this year. Please let me go,"

"I guess you can, it is your birthday," Emma said trying to keep the hurt out of her voice.

"Its not my fault that its on a full moon and that your a mermaid," He muttered

"I'll be back later tonight. I'll text you before I come inside to make sure you close your eyes. Feel free to text me if you get in trouble. I love you," he kissed her goodbye then left.

"I'm sure I'll be fine," Emma said to herself.

_The next morning....

"Well that was another uneventful night,"

"They met at te cafe before work the next morning as Ash had called a meeting.

"Whats this for? Its way too early for a meeting," Zane said.

"Is Emma with you guys? Did she stay over at one of your houses last night?"

"No....?"

"She's missing, I went out for my birthday last night..."

"You did what!" Rikki demanded, "Sorry, continue,"

"When I came home last night she wasn't there...I have no idea where she is, seeing as she didn't stay over with you guys,"

They did a quick search but had to go to work. After work they had the large search. Bella and Anna went to Mako Island to look around, where as Rikki and Cleo searched the water.

"Oh my goodness!" Bella exclaimed and rushed to Emma who was sprawled in the middle of a clearing. Emma was unconscious, very pale and cold.

"Anna! I found her!"

Anna made a mini campfire beside Emma to try keep her warm as Bella ran off to swim back and get the others. On the way she bumped into Rikki and Cleo who then rushed to the clearing she had described.

The three of them swam her slowly to their beach heating lightly the water around her mermaid form. The others met them there.

"Please wake up, Emma, please,"

They took her to the hospital â€“ this was a risky move but they obviously cared more about Emma than their secret.

29. Chapter 29

Chapter 29

The group spent that night in the waiting room, waiting for news on their friend.

"I'm sorry to say that Emma Gilbert is in a coma â€“ she is stable but we are not sure when she will wake up. This is a very strange case, never seen anything like it..." A nurse said trailing off, "Anyway, you may go in and see her two at a time for about two minutes each, family first thanks,"

Emma's parents with Elliot â€“ the nurse made an exception to them. Ash and Cleo went in next.

"Why did I have to go out, If I hadn't this would never of happened," Cleo tried to console Ash but he couldn't be consoled. He went to Emma's bedside and closed his eyes.

"I love you Emma, wake up for me. This is my entire fault; I let this happen. I love you,"

"Your time is up,"

"Shoot, I'm late for work," Bella exclaimed. The group split off for work except for Ash who had gotten the day off.

Weeks went by and Emma's status hadn't changed. Lewis' birthday came and went. Though they celebrated, no one was very cheery. Everyone was losing hope. They would always talk about the awesome times they'd had together.

"I've been such an idiot, please, please wake up, I love you so much, I should have seen this sooner, I should have proposed in the first place, I love you," Ash said desperately talking to the unconscious girl. Just as Ash said this, Emma' eyelids fluttered and her hand weakly lifted to touch him.

"Ash," she whispered

He stared for a second wondering whether it was real or not.

"Nurse, nurse!" he yelled, "Yes, I'm here Emma, It's going to be okay," He was overjoyed.

That afternoon she had gained enough energy to speak. Ash had been by her side nearly the whole time.

"Ash? How long have I been out?"

"About two and a half months, its your birthday in a week,"

"Wow."

"I love you Emma,"

"I love you too Ash,"

"Emma, I've been so stupid to not have realised sooner. I love you so much and can't live without you..."

"Shh, its alright Ash,"

"No, its not, I cant believe its taken me this long to realise. Anyway, I know this is a bad place and time, and I don't have a ring but, Emma Gilbert will you marry me?"

"Of course I will, I'm pretty sure I've already said I will," she replied beaming. They kissed passionately.

Her family came and visited her during the day, relieved that she was okay.

All her friends came rushing in at different points of the day to see her, but Anna and Rikki came together.

"I'm sorry for worrying you..."

"Damn right you should be," Rikki said, she then softened, "We missed you so much, glad your back," They hugged. "What actually happened?"

"I have actually no idea. I have an idea though. I think I may have gotten moonstruck, 'cos I can't remember a thing."

"We found you in a coma on Mako Island in one of the clearings. I assumed thats what happened,"Anna said.

"Oh...kay"

That was one mystery that would never be solved, they never discovered what happened to Emma on Ash's 26th but in result of this Ash realised his true feelings for her and proposed.

A/N: **_Please, please review and tell me what you think. Criticism is welcome but no flames. Thanks, you guys make my day
**_-

30. Chapter 30

Chapter 30

Funnily enough Emma was released on her 25th Birthday. That night they had heaps of celebrations, for her birthday, for her life and the engagement. They had to keep it realitively low key however because of Emma's delicate state of health.

Once Emma was back to full health she joined them all in long swims along the Gold Coast.

One month later...The Moon Pool...

"Guys, I was wondering whether we could swim to Hawaii for my birthday," Anna said

"Sounds cool...we have to ask the guys first," Cleo replied,

"So its actually possible to swim there...?"

"Yeah!," Rikki paused, "Cleo did it all the time to visit Lewis," she rolled her eyes

"She used Hawaii as the stop over on the way to America," Bella clarified.

"Zane could probably drive the boys there in his oversized toy boat," Rikki stated

The girls swam back to tell the guys. Everyone was keen except for Ben.

"Would it be safe...?"

"Yeah, Cleo's done it before," Anna answered enthusiastically.

"Okay then, I'm in,"

Everyone packed there stuff into the boat except for Ash who couldn't get time off work.

"I'll miss you Ash,"

"Don't get into any trouble," Ash replied to Emma

They kissed goodbye. After this Emma dived into the water to join the other mermaids and Ben.

It took a few days to swim the distance to Hawaii, the mermaids had to wait occasionally for the boat to catch up. Each night they dried out and slept the night onboard. This was a good idea as Emma wasn't as fit as she once was. After a long time they finally made it to their destination. By the time they docked it was the day of Anna's birthday, they had timed it perfectly.

"Thanks so much guys for coming" Anna beamed at them.

"You're welcome; Happy Birthday" They went to a lavish restaurant and spoilt Anna for her birthday.

The girls sunbathed on the beaches with the exception of Anna and Ben; Anna dragged him shopping and the rest of the guys went surfing and diving. The mermaids did many dry activities such as sightseeing and went to beaches where no one was and swam amongst the crystal water and beautiful marine life.

"Hey, can we stop over in Fiji?" Rikki asked, "Or should we swim there next week? I have some fantastic spots I wanna show you guys"

Character Profile Update:

**Rikki Chadwick: **Aged 24, Been in a relationship with Zane Bennett for 6+ years

**Cleo McCartney: **Aged 24, Married to Lewis McCartney for nearly a year

**Emma Gilbert: **Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Ash Dove for 8 years

**Isabella 'Bella' Benjamin: **Aged 24, Married to Will Benjamin for half a year

**Lewis McCartney: **Aged 25, Married to Cleo McCartney for nearly a year

**Ash Dove: **Aged 27, Been in a relationship with Emma Gilbert for 8 years

Zane Bennett: Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Rikki Chadwick for 6+ years

**Anna Matthews: **Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Ben Charles for 3+ years

**Robert 'Ben' Charles: **Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Anna Matthews for 3+ years

William 'Will' Benjamin: Aged 24, Married to Bella Benjamin for half a year

**A/N: **_Please please review thanks

31. Chapter 31

Chapter 31

With all the drama over the past months Zane and Rikki had put their wedding on hold. Now, since things seemed like they had settled down, they decided on the day they would have their wedding, on the 30th of May

A week after the Hawaiian Expedition...(14th of April), Rikki's Cafe..._

"Hey, I'm Anita," she said in a flirtacious voice,

"I'm Zane, how may I help you?"

"What's on offer? Hmm," she looked like she was pondering, "Cranberry Booster?"

"Sure, coming right up,"

"Are you sure there's nothin' else I can have?"

"What do you mean," Zane said looking up from the smoothie he was making, seeing the look in her eyes he got the gist.

"Oh, you for instance..."

"Sorry, not interested," Zane said firmly interrupting her.

"You sure?" she leaned closer to his face, her perfume intoxicating, taken by surprise she kissed him.

Just at this moment Rikki came out of the office flicking through some envelopes,

"So, when do we want to..." She looked up taking in the scene. It was all too familiar. Pretty girl, Zane, a kiss. Definately too familiar.

Rikki's face crumpled and she ran back into the office.

"Rikki, Rikki, it's not what you think," He chased her to the door. Anita just smiled when Zane shot her the evils. He tried the handle.

"Rikki, let me in!"

"No!" came the muffled reply.

"You know I'd never do anything like that to you..."

"Really? It seems to me that you've done this before to me, hmmmm, not once but TWICE!" she shouted back.

He stopped at a loss for a reply. He knew that was true and he had lived every day since regretting his actions.

"Rikki," he began in defeat,

"I don't want to hear it Zane..."

"Wait," he exclaimed, "Here me out."

There was silence coming from the other side of the door.

"Okay. Havn't I already told you that I'd never do that again? I've already begged on my knees for forgiveness. I thought I had yours. I'd never do something like that again on purpose. I **love** you Rikki, I don't want to hurt you that way or any other way...not again..."

The door opened slightly and Rikki's face, covered in tears, her mouth in a firm line appeared. One thing Zane never understood was why the girls' tears didn't transform them. Regardless of this he said softly to her, "It was all her," with pleading eyes.

She had never seen him so helpless, so down. She softened wiping the tears from her cheeks.

"I believe you Zane, but you had better not ever, **ever **let me catch you in a situation like that again or...." She didn't get to finish as his lips sealed her mouth. She relaxed into his arms.

Zane went back to the counter to finish serving the troublesome Anita. Zane silently handed her her drink.

"Wanna go out sometime"

"No way,"

"Just one date?"

"Not on your life,"

"Your real hot..." she moaned

"Never in a thousand years."

Rikki came over to stand by Zane.

"And who is this?" she said pecking him on the cheek all smiles again,

"Anita, this is Rikki, my **fiance**,"

"I'd like to say it was nice to meet you but that'd be a lie. If you so much as life a finger, you will be out."

Anita smirked and left with her smoothie cup.

"Zane, I'm so sorry for not trusting you,"

"Its alright Rikki, I should never have allowed myself to be in that compromising postition, now or in the past,"

"Okay. I'm glad we've got this sorted out. You know Zane you really have changed from having Miriam just as a convenient girlfriend type thing to being in a very committed relationship with me, I like that,"

He smiled and leaned in for a kiss. Rikki returned it.

"I am definately yours, and committed, don't let anyone let you think otherwise. Any flirt can't change the way I feel about you, You are stuck with me forever"

"Really?"

"Yes really," they smiled at each other lovingly.

They walked out of the office together with Zane's arm slung across Rikki's shoulder.

During their lunch break the two of them started to discuss their wedding.

"I've never been good at this kinda stuff, but I can try," Rikki said in a small voice.

"You'll be fine Rikki. So..."

"I want a simple wedding, nothing extravagant, just close friends and family at a simple ceremony,"

"Okay Dokey, your wish is my command," he mock bowed. Rikki giggled

"I know, Rikki, giggling.

"You're actually fine with that?"

"Yes, its your day, i'm just along for the ride, and of course for marrying a special someone,"

One kiss turned into quite a few...

At this moment Cleo walked in,

"Oh, not again!"

32. Chapter 32

Chapter 32

Another few weeks later (9__th__ May), Cleo and Lewis' house....

"Lewis?"

"Yes Sweetie?"

"How would you feel about starting a family?"

"I'd say bring it on. I'd love to start a family Cleo,"

"Oh, thats good," she looked as if a huge load had been lifted off her chest, "Thats good 'cos i'm already pregnant," she finished not looking at her husband

"Did I hear that correctly?"

She nodded. He beamed and hugged her tightly.

"Thats amazing! You're sure?"

"Yes, positive, I took three tests,"

"How far are you along?"

"I think since after Emma was found, so about two or three months,"

"Okay then, we'll tell everyone tomorrow â€“ we don't want to take the spotlight from Will tonight,"

Will's birthday dinner was cheery and fun. After the birthday meal, they got into teams and played pictionary. Naturally all the couples paired off, this sparked unwanted romance between turns. Rikki was a little hesitant at first but soon got into it, so much so that her and Zane won nearly every game.

The next day the group met up again afterwork, they had to wait a while for Bella as she was held up because she had to give a group of naughty boys detention. Once she arrived the group got underway with their daily discussions of how work was going etc. Over the years they had continued their meetings nearly every day, obviously keeping

as close as ever- just as they were when they were teenagers.

"So guys, Cleo and I have some news,"

"What is it now?" Rikki asked sarcastically, "Last time the news wasn't all that great â€“ Denman and all," Everyone cringed at the mention of her name.

"Oops, sorry guys," Rikki winced.

"Anyway, we are pregnant!" Cleo said with a smile

"OMG! Congrats!" Rikki replied and other congratulations followed.

"When are they due?" Emma asked

"We think about January, February... we aren't completely sure,"

Cleo and Lewis' house, later that night...

"I still marvel at how you do that." Cleo stated gesturing towards Lewis' perfectly folded pile of towels, and the sheet he had just done.

"Yes, well..." he looked self-conscious

"Hey, hey, it's a good thing, a good quality," Cleo said brightly, "Promise me you wont go on a macho hunt again, like last time, your just not that kinda guy. I married you. Not some tough guy,"

"Okay, I promise," Cleo smiled and they kissed.

The day of Rikki's and Zane's wedding arrived and the couple had a very, very private ceremony.

(30th May)

Terry Chadwick, Harrison Bennett (who had warmed up to the firey Rikki over the years,) Nate, a couple of Zane's other close friends and of course the rest of the group. There was to be no reception, just a family/ friends dinner. This was Zane's idea and Rikki agreed with it quickly.

"You're such great guy. You totally get me. When did you get to know me so well?" Rikki had asked.

Rikki was wearing a slim white dress with red ribbon lacing around it; it was simple but elegant. The tuxedo Zane was wearing had a matching red tie. They had the ceremony on Mako Island, in the spot where they had kissed. Zane had said it made a whole lot more sense since he knew that she was a mermaid as to why it was burning. On some of the trees there was still scarring all these years later from irreparable damage.

The small party cheered, an especially loud hoot from Mr Chadwick when the newly wed couple shared their first kiss.

The dinner that night of course had speeches. Rikki and Zane had

booked their own cafe out and had placed two large tables next to each other in the centre of the room. The couple employed their staff extra hours and extra pay so they would serve them all.

"Achem!" Terry tapped his glass. Everyones heads turned in his direction. "For those who don't know me, I'm Terry Chadwick, Rikki's dad. I've had the great pleasure of being to father to this amazing young woman." Rikki beamed at him, "Though we've had our ups and downs, we've always pulled through whether it was family or financial troubles." He paused, " I had the pleasure of meeting Zane in a compromisable circumstance, fortunately that was resolved," Rikki and Zane looked at each other knowingly. "Anyway, I'm just saying that these are a pair of wonderful young people, and I wish them all the best in their future together," He concluded lifting his glass.

"I would also like to make a speech," Harrison stood up. "Though my first impression of Rikki was rough, I mean very rough, over past years I have gotten closer to her and I believe we have no problems with each other." Rikki nodded in response, he continued, "Anyway, along with you Terry, I do believe we should toast a good future to the couple,"

After this there were a couple more speeches made by friends and thus ended the wedding celebrations of Rikki and Zane Bennett.

**A/N: please keep reviewing **

33. Chapter 33

Chapter 33

_The 10_th_ of July..._

"What do you want to do for your birthday?" Lewis asked his wife. Cleo now had quite a decent sized baby bump that protruded from her slim frame.

"I'm not sure. Something not too exerting. " she replied. She hadn't been feeling over great recently at round four months pregnant.

"Friend and Family dinner?"

"That'd be great Lewis," she kissed his cheek.

Two days later...

The twelfth of July arrived and a family dinner was held that night at their house. Don, Sam, and Kim were invited, Lewis' four older brothers and parents were invited also but weren't available. Anna, Ben, Ash, Emma, Zane, Rikki, Bella and Will of course came too.

"Cheers to the birthday girl!" Don lifted his glass. As he did so he spilt his drink all over Cleo.

"Oh no!" he exclaimed apologising profusely while wondering why Cleo wasn't running away.

Cleo got up from her chair to make a more comfortable transformation and Lewis caught her expertly. Don realised that everyone in the room knew her secret and that was why she didn't run away.

"It's okay dad," Cleo said. Lewis got her a towel. Once her returned Rikki began to dry her slowly from the other side of the table as to not arrise suspicion. Small plumes of steam rose of her scaly tail, unnoticeable to anyone but the closest to her.

Kim noticed however. She knitted her eyebrows in thought. The others hadn't batted an eyelid, as if they saw her transform all the time or something.

'Maybe they're mermaids too!' she thought to herself remembering that diary she found all those years ago. 'I'll wet a couple of them, just to see. Emma looks like the type, Bella kinda does too. I don't know about Rikki or Anna though...Elliot did say that Emma never swum...but Rikki rescued him when he was eleven from the sea...who knows...i'll try wet them all,'

Although Kim was a nicer person to be around, she was just a cheeky...

"Who would like refills?" Kim asked sweetly, Cleo gave her a questioning look but asked for one. "Thats very sweet of you Kim," Sam said.

Kim was to be bringing back the water and juice jugs to the table as nearly everyone wanted a refill.

'Perfect,' she thought to herself. As she came over to the table she fake tripped and spilt the liquids all over Emma and Rikki who was sitting next to her.

"You idiot!" Rikki yelled.

Kim tried to act innocent. Emma stood up ubrantly as she did so knocking Kim's elbow, jolting the jug forward spilling further liquid over Bella also. Cleo just gaped at Kim. Surely this was a set up. She knew Kim probably suspected something...she wasn't dumb.

The girls tried to escape the room but every where they went seemed to be blocked by Kim

"Too late," Rikki groaned and slumped over.

Kim stared open mouthed. Cleo and the guys looked on in horror. Sam was staring and Don looked and fainted toppling onto the floor from his chair. Anna and Ben tried to stay as far away from the liquid as possible.

"Kim you are cleaning up this sticky mess!" Cleo yelled at her.

Kim kept staring at the girls infront of her. She was right. She couldn't believe it. Neither could Sam or Don.

"Okay, this needs a **lot **of explaining,"

Rikki dried herself and the others before returning to her seat between Zane and Emma.

Cleo explained why she had left them out of the story previously and explained again. This time of course she left out that Ben and Anna were also like them.

"I can't believe you lied to us!"

"I didn't!" Cleo exclaimed, "I just left out parts of the truth," she said indignantly, "We had to protect each other Dad,"

"So i'm guessing you guys have powers too?" Sam asked softly.

"Yup," Rikki replied defeatedly. "I have the power to heat stuff â€“ hence the 'steam drying', "

"Very convenient," Sam replied

"Definately."

The girls told them about their powers. Bella used her power on the jug of juice, turning its remaining contents into orange flavoured jelly. She offered it to Sam, Don and Kim.

"Come on, its not going to bite," she laughed.

They were a bit hesitant at first but when they had swllowed their eyes lit up and they wanted more.

"Do your parents know?"

"No." Was the quick answer, and they all looked guilty somehow.

"I'm telling my dad in the weekend," Rikki announced, "I'm tired of all the lying, I think he'll cope with the news,"

"Lets all tell our parents soon if we think they'll handle it," Bella said, "We are old enough to look after ourselves."

34. Chapter 34

Chapter 34

Rikki breathed. This was it. Her husband held her hand for support as they walked into the trailer where she lived all those years ago.

"Dad?"

"Hey sweetheart," he came into the main room of the trailer.

"Dad, I've got something to tell you..."

"Shoot."

She took a deep breath. "You have got to promise not to tell anyone. It could put me in a lot of danger."

"Sure. You've got my trust," he looked at her quizzically.

"Okay."she took another deep breath. "I'm a mermaid. I know it sounds weird but I am."

He chuckled then seeing her expression stopped. "You're being serious?"

"Yes Dad. Do you want a demonstration?"

"Okay...?"

Zane went and got her a glass of water. Rikki sat down on the couch. Her heart beat rapidly.

She poured it over her arm. "Please don't freak"

Ten seconds later she transformed, her body glistening from the water along it, her scales sparkling in the evening light. He gasped.

"Wow. Thats amazing," he said as he took in his daughter. "How long have you been like this?"

"About nine years..."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah..." she winced, "Sorry 'bout that..."

"I did suspect something, since you never wanted to go surfing with me like you used to and you were terrified of water and never did the dishes or swum even on the hottest days...this makes some things make sense..."

Rikki went on to demonstrate her powers to him. He was very impressed by her power over lightning. Overall he wasnt too fussed.

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_Meanwhile at Cleo and Lewis' house....

"Hey Cleo, look at what I found," Lewis said bringing a stack of papers to her desk (which was in the room designated as their office.)

"What is it?" Cleo asked looking up from her Dolphin Research.

"Its Denman's research on 'you-know-what.' We never looked at it and I must'veplaced it in my filing cabinet"

"I did wonder where that got too... Anything good in it?"

"I havn't properly looked at it, but I think there are notes on the tests she did on you and theories etc. Wanna look now?"

"Yeah." Cleo pushed aside her papers.

"Hey, listen to this one; If any of these girls want to have children the offspring have a very high chance of having the same DNA, causing the same effects throughout the systems of cells. The genes passed on

through their parent would override the human parent's genes. The mermaid genes may be diluted by the human's but it would be near impossible for the child not have any of the cells that mutate on contact with water."

"So they're going to be a mermaid?" Cleo said placing a hand over her belly.

"That's what this says,"

"Very interesting..."

The couple learnt more about mermaids and their genes based on Denman's research, along with confirmation of somethings they already knew. They learnt that their bloodtypes, cells and other bodily organs were all slightly different to that of a humans'. Apparently their bloodtypes was something that Denman had only ever seen in a dolphin. It, according to her notes, was a cross between a human bloodtype and a one of the x-rays Denman took she deducted that the mermaids had bigger lungs and special pockets in their tails so when in their mermaid form, it would spur them to be able to hold their breaths for much longer than a regular human being. They learnt that their stamina as humans was very high and their stamina as mermaids was even higher.

"What about this one? 'The structure of the body looks to be very strong, diminishing the speed of age. It seems to me that the girls will not age the same as a normal human. They may have double the average life span of an average human female, and their appearance may be very young. For example at age 60 I estimate they may only look to be 30 years of age. And from the span of ages 20 to 40 I believe there will be no age.' Wow" Lewis said

"Yeah."

"That means your powers give you youth!...Oh...that means I'll look old in comparison to you..."

"Don't worry Lewis." Cleo said brightly, "You'll always be young to me," she kissed him.

There was other fascinating information, but the most important to Cleo was the theories and notes on their genes, cells and pregnancies.

"We have to tell the others."

"I'm right behind you on that decision,"

The group came over and were just as shocked as Cleo and Lewis were initially.

35. Chapter 35

Chapter 35

The next day...

"I think I'm gonna..." Bella ran to the bathroom and spewed into the

toilet. Will rushed in concerned after his wife and held her hair back until she was finished.

"Thanks Will,"

She sat down in the bathtub and Will gave her a warm, wet, facecloth to wipe the sick away. This of course transformed her.

"I'm not feeling too good," she said to Will in a small voice.

Meanwhile...

Rikki fingered the thin scar than ran across her cheek. Today was the day one year ago, that she had escaped from the counterfeitors. Though she did not show it, Rikki was still disturbed from that encounter. She was still trying, with Zane's help, to get over the fears created by that horrific event.

"You alright?" Zane asked concerned

"Yeah, Zane, fine."

"Rikki, I've known you long enough to know when something is wrong."

She looked over at him.

"Do you know what today is?"

"Did someone die?" she looked at him blankly.

"Sorry, sorry, not funny I know, it was a joke," she shot him an 'I'm not amused look.'

"Seriously, what is wrong?"

"Today, one year ago, was when...you know? I was kidnapped...and kept in that cold, dark, lonely room, with no food..." she shivered.

Zane embraced her. "It's alright Rikki, that's in the past. Those men were arrested and you are back with me," he said consolingly.

"I should just get over this. What is wrong with me!"

"Nothing! You've had trauma. We'll get through this,"

"Thanks Zane; you're the best. I love you,"

"Anytime you want to talk about this, I'm here to listen. I know I haven't really been a good listener before...but I will give it a shot for you."

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Meanwhile at the Gilbert's house...

"Emma darling, Ash, come in," Mrs Gilbert came to meet them at the door.

"'Sup Emma," Elliot said coming down the stairs, he went over to hug her and slapped Ash on the back in a man-hug.

Halfway through the meal Emma seemed to get very tense and Ash took her hand in encouragement.

"Is something wrong Emma?" her father asked

"Ahh," she looked at Ash, he nodded. "I have something to tell you..."

"You're not pregnant are you?" her mother interrupted

"NO! No way! We're not even married yet, what made you jump to that conclusion?"

Ash just laughed.

"No. I actually have something very important that I have hidden from you for the past eight or nine years. You have to promise not to tell anyone â€“ not a soul,"

"Okay...?"

"You have to promise not to,"

"It's okay Em, you can trust us. I swear to tell a soul,"

Emma took a deep breath.

"Okay. Please do not freak out. I'm a mermaid,"

Her family broke out laughing,

"Is this some kind of joke? You really drew us in there..."

"No I'm completely serious," Emma said looking hurt. "Look I'll show you," she said in response to their disbelieving faces. "Ash, pass me your glass of water," Ash obliged and then he went and shut the curtains around the room.

"Okay, here goes...don't freak out, I did warn you"

She got off her chair and sat down on the floor. She tipped the contents of the glass onto her arm. Ten seconds later, she sparkled blue and then her orange scaly tail appeared where her legs once were. Her father gasped and dropped his fork with a clatter.

"You were being serious." Elliot whispered. Her mother just sat there open mouthed. Ash reached out and closed her jaw gently jerking her back to reality. Right after this, he got up and went to get Emma a towel to dry off with.

"This is the reason I quit the swim team, refused to swim and do anything to do with water. It's why I was acting quite 'strange' in high school. Remember that time, on our world trip, that I wouldn't do the special water activities? Again, this is the reason why, it's because I'm a mermaid."

"It all makes sense now," Elliot said

"Another thing," Emma said, "You know when I ate your lobster? And when I ruined your party Dad? And why one time when you came home all that mess was everywhere, that was because of the full moon. Mermaids get affected by it; we get somehow controlled...That's why we think I was in a coma more recently."

"But why keep it from us so long? We could've helped you, we are your family," her mother said indignantly.

Emma winced, "Sorry, we didn't tell anyone...except our boyfriends who all figured it out at some point,"

"Our? We?"

"Ahh," she looked at Ash for help.

He shook his head as if to say 'Just tell them the truth.'

She breathed. "Okay. But now you have to solemnly swear to God not to tell, this will get me into huge trouble with them if you spill,"

"Sure, you have our trust."

"Okay. There are more of us â€“ I'm not the only one,"

"You mean?"

"Yeah, some of my friends are,"

"I bet Cleo is one too, she was always acting strange around water...just like you," Elliot deducted; many things were now making sense to him. He realised that Kim had been right all those years ago when she found that diary of Cleo's...well kinda â€“ it wasn't a cult.

"She is." Emma replied.

"Rikki?"

"Yeah."

"Rikki? Seriously? She doesn't look like the mermaid type. She even saved Elliot's life from drowning all those years ago."

"It's true. She saved him but managed to hide her tail..."

"That's why she was so fast!"

Emma nodded, happy only to tell her parents details of the original trio â€“ protecting Bella, Anna and Ben.

"So how'd it happen?"

"Well remember that time when we were stranded on Mako, when Rikki took us out to sea? Well on that island the three of us went into a pool and somehow we transformed into mermaids...we don't really know how...I guess it was magic."

"So enough about me and the mermaid stuff. How's you and Kim, Elliot?"

"Oh, good, very good," he smiled dreamily.

"How could anyone be smitten with Kim?" Emma whispered to Ash, he just laughed in reply.

36. Chapter 36

Chapter 36

The next day, the main beach...

"Hey beautiful,"

Elliot and Kim walked hand in hand along the beach.

"Elliot, I have amazing news. I'm only allowed to tell you, but I just have to!"

"So do I!"

They sat down in the soft sand, away from any crowds, on the dunes.

"You know like eight years ago I found that diary of Cleo's with all those doodles and stuff? Its real! My sister and her friends â€“ your sister included- are mermaids!"

"I know! That was my news too! Emma told us last night, she mentioned that Rikki and Cleo were mermaids too."

"Bella is too!"

"Really? Okay then"

"We mustn't tell anyone. We promised,"

"Yeah. I couldn't betray them like that. I'm so glad that you know!"

Later on...

"Sophie is back in town for about a week," Will told his wife

"WHAT!"

"Visiting our parents and me..."

"You could've warned us sooner..."

"And we have to go to dinner with my parents and her tonight..."

"Talk about late notice Will!"

"I know, sorry, sorry, I kinda forgot earlier..."

"Let's just hope she won't cause any trouble this time."

That night...

"So this is where you parents live now..." Bella said as she took in the tidy cottage on the waterfront. Will rang the doorbell.

"Come in!" A jolly round man with silver hair opened the door.

"Dad! Long time no see,"

"It's only been a few months Son. How's the beautiful Bella?"

"I'm fine thank you Mr Benjamin," Bella blushed

"Oh, come now, how many times do I have to tell you, call me George,"

"Okay then...George," she smiled.

He led them into the dining room to see a woman with blonde hair, in which strands of grey were peaking through slaving in the kitchen

"Marge! Our guests are here," she spun around quickly

"Oh, they are too," she went over to embrace Bella and then to Will, before gesturing to them to sit down at the circular table in the dining room.

"Daddy" They heard a familiar voice squeal.

The red head entered the room; Bella was trying her best to seem cheerful at Sophie's appearance for the sake of her parents-in-law.

"I visited an architectural firm today and I met the most handsome boy, I do believe we have a dinner date tomorrow night,"

"What was his name?" Bella asked trying to sound interested,

"Robert...I didn't catch his last name," Bella nodded and continued eating.

The following night...

"Anna! Wait!"

Anna ran from his house tears streaming down her cheeks...

The next day...

'Beep, Beep'

Rikki fished her phone out of her denim short's pocket, letting go of Zane's hand in the process.

"It's from Anna." She showed it to him

'EMRGNCY MEET MP'

"Sorry gotta go Zane, I'll be back soon," she smiled and kissed him on the cheek, then ran into the water.

Rikki met up with Cleo, Emma and Bella half way there, as they surfaced in the Moon Pool they saw the auburn haired girl sobbing, her eyes red and puffy. Ben wasn't there.

"Hey hey hey," Rikki said "What's wrong?" she swam over and sat herself on the ledge beside Anna. The other two swam to the other ledges around the pool.

"I saw Ben with another girl...I can't believe four whole years of a relationship down the drain..."

"Don't think like that," Bella interrupted, "I'm sure there was a logical explanation to why she was in his house,"

"Don't worry Anna, I've been through this before, it'll be alright. Soon he'll come running back to you asking for forgiveness." Anna kept sobbing into Rikki's arms. Rikki looked at Bella and Cleo for help. She was never good with the whole tears and comforting thing.

"What does this girl look like? I'll give her a piece of my mind!" Cleo said forcefully. The fierce expression on her face almost made Rikki want to burst out laughing as she pictured the pregnant Cleo fighting someone.

"Scratch that Cleo, I will...or Lewis will...don't want you to over exert yourself in your current state,"

"Short red hair, she kinda looks like Will actually..." They all gasped and gave each other looks.

Rikki detangled herself from Anna's arms and said with clenched fists, "Sophie."

"Rikki...your fists..."

Emma fanned herself. If it got any hotter then she would use her power against Rikki's.

"Oh, sorry guys...but really, how could she!"

"That evil little..."

"Of all things spiteful..."

"Anna, she's the one who kissed Zane!" Now it was Anna's turn to gasp.

"Will's sister." Bella said, "I saw her at dinner a few nights ago with Will's parents. Pretty awkward meal that was."

"She was real quick to get a guy..." Emma said.

"I thought she'd changed," Bella said.

Rikki fumed silently to herself.

"I'm going to sort her out," Rikki said forcefully and prepared to swim out.

"NO!" Emma said. "That's not going to solve anything but create enemies. Let's just see what happens. Who knows Ben could have been set up, he was probably subject to her advances,"

"True," Rikki nodded in agreement.

Meanwhile...at Ben's house...

"Get off me!"

"What?"

"I said, get off me!" Ben shoved Sophie gently but firmly off him. "Get out. You are not welcome here. I have a girlfriend who was supposed to meet me here, about now!"

"But..."

"Don't you get it? I do not want to be with you. I have a girlfriend whom I love. What are you even doing here? I only met you at the office today! For all I know Anna could have seen us and now I'll have to patch up a wonderful relationship!"

Sophie left in a huff.

'She'll probably be at the moon pool,' Ben thought to himself after realising that he would have been seen. He dived into the water and swam to Mako Island.

37. Chapter 37

**Chapter 37 **

"Speak of the devil," Emma said as the Merman surfaced. Anna splashed her face to attempt to wash away the remaining tears, this did not work as well as she hoped â€“ her eyes were still red and puffy.

"Anna, it was all her,"

"It's alright Ben, we've discussed this, and she's done it before; to Rikki and Zane."

"So you're not mad?"

"It wasn't your fault â€“ yes I am hurt, but I forgive you," Anna smiled at him. He breathed a sigh of relief and kissed her cheek.

"Just one question," Rikki asked, "Why was Sophie there in the first place?"

The Next Day...

_Bella and Will's house....

"Bella? I think we need to have a talk,"

"Okay then, shoot." She sat down on the couch.

"Well over the months we've been married, I've been thinking of starting a family and..." he began flustered.

"It's alright Will," Bella said soothingly, "In fact I've been thinking the same thing. Actually, I think we maybe already pregnant."

"Really!" His eyes widened.

"Well, you know how I've been feeling off lately..."

"Ohh!" It finally clicked in his brain.

_Meanwhile at Emma and Ash's place....

"So that's the date?"

"That's the date."

"All set?"

"Yup."

_Later that day... (18__th__ of July)_

"We have big news to tell you guys!"

"So do we!" The two couples laughed.

"You guys go first," Emma said to Bella.

"Okay. Will and I are pregnant!" There was excited chatter amongst the group.

"Yay! You can join me!" Cleo said placing a hand over her belly.

"What was your news?" Anna asked Emma and Ash.

"We've decided on the date of our wedding."

_A few days later...the bottom of the ocean....

'Wow' Rikki thought to herself.

She picked it up and swam quickly back to the surface where Zane was waiting.

"Have a look at this!" Rikki said, passing it to Zane.

"Wow."

"That's what I said â€“ well thought"

"It should belong in a museum"

The couple were looking at a small golden statue which looked to have Aztec Origin â€“ neither of them were experts on Aztec arts â€“ Rikki tended to find other types of artefact.

"I wonder what it's doing here"

The following day the two of them closed the cafe early and took the artefact to the museum â€“ to donate it. Married into the Bennett family and owning a successful cafe meant that Rikki did not need the money, meaning that she was happy to donate the valuable artefact the museum -free of charge.

"You sure?"

"Positive. I don't need the money."

"Can we have your details anyway?"

"Sure thing,"

"Thank you, Mrs Bennett,"

'Wow, 'Mrs' takes a lot of getting used to,' Rikki thought to herself.

Rikki took the letters out of the letterbox the next morning before work. She flicked through them as she went back inside.

"For Zane, For Zane, For the Cafe, Bills...Ooh, one for me!" Rikki said under her breath as she walked. She frowned in thought, wondering whom it was from.

'_To the Generous Rikki Bennett, who graciously donated such a priceless Aztec artefact to our museum, our humble thanks.' _

"Aw, that's nice," her eyes continued to scan the page.

'_P.S. Since you did not take the money yesterday, here is ten percent of the royalties for your charity. A \$300 Cheque'_

Rikki gasped then frowned again.

"Zane!" she called, he came into the room still in his dressing gown. "They sent me the money â€“ I dint want it! I cannot accept." He laughed and kissed her cheek.

"You deserved it."

She crossed her arms. He chuckled again.

Character Profile Update** â€“ (sorry there are so many, it is to help me keep up with myself :P)**

DATE: 22nd July

**Rikki Bennett: **Aged 24, Married to Zane Bennett for about a

month

**Cleo McCartney: **Aged 25, Married to Lewis McCartney for about a year. Cleo is 3+ months pregnant.

**Emma Gilbert: **Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Ash Dove for 8 years

**Isabella 'Bella' Benjamin: **Aged 24, Married to Will Benjamin for nearly a year. Bella is 2 months pregnant

**Lewis McCartney: **Aged 25, Married to Cleo McCartney for about a year

**Ash Dove: **Aged 27, Been in a relationship with Emma Gilbert for 8 years

Zane Bennett: Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Rikki Chadwick for 6+ years

**Anna Matthews: **Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Ben Charles for 3+ years

**Robert 'Ben' Charles: **Aged 25, Been in a relationship with Anna Matthews for 3+ years

William 'Will' Benjamin: Aged 25, Married to Bella Benjamin for nearly a year

38. Chapter 38 and Character List

Chapter 38

"You'll be glad to know that Sophie has left for Perth this morning. I really am sorry for all the troubles shes caused you guys," Will said apologetically.

There were a few cheers from around the couches in Lewis and Cleo's house.

0-0-0-0-0-0

The day finally arrived, for Emma it seemed like an age. It was the 21st of August

Rikki's P.O.V

Wow, Emma was serious when she said 'big and white'. This is seriously white. I hope the dress I'm going to be wearing won't be too floralâ€œoh well

Normal P.O.V

Rikki, Bella, Anna and Cleo were to be the bridesmaids- all decked out in lacy pale pink gowns. Rikki had to try extremely hard not to grimace when she saw them. She did not want to offend the bride on her wedding day; Rikki had been through the nerve-racking procedures before; so she wore the dress without complaint. To be perfectly honest she actually looked stunning in it, no matter what she

thought.

There were bunches of white roses throughout the old church. Ash had let Emma go all out for the wedding. They both had solid jobs so expenses would not be a problem.

Elliot and Ash's older brother, Ivan, were the best men. Ash had chosen Elliot as well, because the two of them had become very close over the years.

Ash was dressed in a tuxedo with a white jacket that matched Emma's dress.

The ceremony went off without a hitch. Mr and Mrs Ash Dove went and mingled with their friends at the extravagant reception.

Ash and Emma departed for the honeymoon the next morning.

CHARACTERS (_**Present and Future mentioned**_**):**

-Rikki Bennett (_nee' Chadwick)_

-Zane Bennett

-Terry Chadwick (father of Rikki)

-Harrison Bennett (father of Zane)

-Cordeilia Carlton (mother of Rikki)

-Vanessa Masterton (mother of Zane)

-Cleo McCartney (_nee' Sertori)_

-Lewis McCartney

-Don and Sam Sertori (dad and stepmother to Cleo)

-Bev Sertori (mother to Cleo)

-Kim Sertori (sister to Cleo)

-Lenny McCartney (brother to Lewis)

-Lionel McCartney (brother to Lewis)

-Liam McCartney (brother to Lewis)

-Luke McCartney (brother to Lewis)

-Brian and Pamela McCartney (parents to Lewis)

-Emma Dove _(nee' Gilbert)_

-Ash Dove

-Ivan Dove (brother to Ash)

-Nick and Camilla Dove (parents to Ash)

-Elliot Gilbert (brother to Emma)

-Neil and Lisa Gilbert (parents to Emma)

-Bella Benjamin (_nee' Hartley)_

_--Will Benjamin

-Sophie Benjamin (sister to Will)

-George and Margaret 'Marge' Benjamin (parents to Will)

-Briget and Cameron Hartley (parents to Bella)

-Ellie Hartley (sister to Bella)

-Georgia Hartley (sister to Bella)

-Anna Matthews

-Ben Charles

o00oo

"Lewis? What's this?" Cleo asked accusingly.

"Yeah...about that..."

"_How to deliver a baby" _she said as she looked at the titles.

"Lewis?"

"I wanted to take some courses to make sure I do the right thing...I think we should deliver it at home, you know, to reduce the risks...I just completed a course on how to use an ultrasound, so if I buy one, then we can use it,"

"But won't the gel transform...Oh!"

"Yes, exactly,"

Everything was going to be under control, all because of her fantastic husband Lewis.

Cleo was beginning to find it very strange when she swum as she was becoming heavier. In addition, the bulge on her front made her wobbly in the water, it was hard to swerve quickly and it threw her out of proportion with how she normally swum.

The 1st of October...

The Bennett's house...

"Good morning Zane," Rikki walked into the kitchen. Zane kissed her on the cheek. "What's happening today?"

"Just the usual thing, work and all...hey you know we have that power bill to pay..."

"Seeing as you used most of the power- using the computer for hours

on end- you should pay the bill." Rikki replied annoyed.

"Hey, hey, why are you so tetchy today?"

"No reason. Must have slept badly," Rikki said. In reality, she was miffed that he had forgotten her birthday and was mentioning bills of all things.

Rikki sat down at the dining table dejectedly and began to read the paper.

"Surprise! Happy Birthday Rikki!" Zane yelled startling her.

He pulled out a tray of an already made breakfast, and set it down in front of her; he then gave her a present wrapped in red paper. She looked up at him a smile replacing her frown. He kissed her gently.

"You didn't think I'd forgotten your birthday did you?" he saw Rikki's sheepish expression, "You did" he put on a disbelieving voice, "Come on, where's the trust!" she laughed.

"Thank you Zane,"

"You're welcome" she hugged him tightly.

That night the group met up at the cafe, Bella got her old band together and they played a song the Bella had written for Rikki as her birthday present.

A cake was brought out with a 25 candles on it. Again, like many previous years Rikki blew out the candles before everyone could sing.

Marine Institute where Lewis works, one month later...

"Yeah, that's great,"

"You don't sound too happy about this,"

"Well...I have to tell my wife..."

39. Chapter 39

Chapter 39

After Work...

"Good afternoon sweetie," Cleo kissed Lewis on the cheek as he walked in the door. "Hey, what's up? You seem tense,"

"I got a promotion,"

"That's great,' she smiled at him

"And a scholarship study," he continued

"What's wrong?" she asked picking up his troubled expression.

"The area of study is overseas. I have to leave"

Cleo's happy face crumpled,

"No, no Cleo, not like that, not like the last time. I definitely won't go if you don't want me to."

"What is it exactly?" she asked in a small voice.

"I got a sponsorship to study the marine life not found anywhere else; like the hector dolphins, to boost my work experience- it's kinda like a promotion"

"At least that's not as far as America," she muttered under her breath.

"Cleo, I won't go if you need me here. I want to be here for you, and the baby."

"How long will you be gone?"

"Three months," he said cringing. She gasped.

"But they'll be due pretty much as soon as you get back! What if it's premature?"

"I know, I know," he said frantically, "that's the reason I won't go. It is your decision,"

"You should go, it's a great opportunity for you."

"You sure?" she paused for a moment thinking,

"Yes, I'm sure. I shouldn't hold you back."

"You're not..." she held up her hand to silence him.

"You are going." She said firmly.

"Have I ever told you how much I love you Cleo?"

"I believe you have, numerous times," she said a small smile breaking out onto her face. "Anyway, I'll swim over every week to see you; it would only take a few hours..."

"No. No you most definitely won't."

"Why not?"

"Do you think I want my pregnant wife swimming across the Tasman Sea?"

"Probably not."

"Are you still saying I can go?"

"Yes."

"Thank you so much Cleo. I will visit you each month -we have enough funds. I will Skype you every night,"

"That sounds good." She kissed his cheek, "Oh, when are you leaving?"

"Next week" he said guiltily

"Well, that's more time than last time,"

"You know I'm still sorry 'bout that..." he began

"Don't be Lewis. I mean, it can't have been that bad â€“ it got you this career."

"It did," he smiled at her. "Well, we better make the time we have left together count,"

The group met up daily for long periods of time until the day that Lewis was to be leaving for Dunedin, the South Island of New Zealand. This day was very tearful...

"Cleo, I will talk to you every day."

"I love you so much Lewis," Cleo choked out,

"I love you too," they kissed.

"Aren't you going to say goodbye to us too?" Rikki demanded,

"Yes. Of course Rikki. Good bye everyone â€“ I will see you in a while," he embraced them all.

"Well there will be one less nerd around," Rikki managed to squeak out

"I'll miss you too Rikki," they hugged tightly.

Everyone 'awed' - this was because Rikki never showed much affection â€“ except for Zane of course.

Cleo and Lewis kissed once more before Lewis boarded the plane for New Zealand.

Before Lewis left, he taught Will how to use the ultrasound machine, in order to look after Cleo, and Bella when it came to that side of things.

Cleo decided sometimes to use the spare room at Bella and Will's apartment. The room that used to be hers. She felt at home, comfortable, and it spared her the loneliness of an empty house. She missed Lewis heaps.

A/N: please please review. Thanks to Hermione 321 for all the reviews :P

and to MermaidKennedy :D

A/N #2: Hey everyone! I just wrote something extra to insert in chapter 35. i have inserted it there now, but here it is by itself :D

Meanwhile...

Rikki fingered the thin scar than ran across her cheek. Today was the day one year ago, that she had escaped from the counterfeiters. Though she did not show it, Rikki was still disturbed from that encounter. She was still trying, with Zane's help, to get over the fears created by that horrific event.

"You alright?" Zane asked concerned

"Yeah, Zane, fine."

"Rikki, I've known you long enough to know when something is wrong."

She looked over at him.

"Do you know what today is?"

"Did someone die?" she looked at him blankly.

"Sorry, sorry, not funny I know, it was a joke," she shot him an 'I'm not amused look.'

"Seriously, what is wrong?"

"Today, one year ago, was when...you know? I was kidnapped...and kept in that cold, dark, lonely room, with no food..." she shivered.

Zane embraced her. "It's alright Rikki, that's in the past. Those men were arrested and you are back with me," he said consolingly.

"I should just get over this. What is wrong with me!"

"Nothing! You've had trauma. We'll get through this,"

"Thanks Zane; you're the best. I love you,"

"Anytime you want to talk about this, I'm here to listen. I know I haven't really been a good listener before...but I will give it a shot for you."

(Please read from chapter 35 - this is not from chapter 39...)

40. Chapter 40

Chapter 40

The group stopped suddenly as they reached the door of the cafe.

"Oh no! Its raining!"

"Its alright, we'll sort it," Cleo smiled and thought back to the first time she had mastered the rain.

**Flashback**

"Don't panic guys, let me try something." Cleo stepped out into the

rain with her hand raised. The droplets of water seemed to rebound off an invisible shield.

"Come one guys, I'll stop it from hitting you." She raised her other hand, dividing her powers into both hands, giving her a larger range. Rikki took a bold but tentative step out into the falling rain. No rain hit her skin. She smiled at Cleo who returned it. Cleo was controlling the rain.

"Anna? Ben? Could you take over for a sec? You just redirect the water as it comes down,"

"Sure,"

"Okay then." They replied

Cleo released her control over the rain, Ben and Anna managed to do the job that Cleo had been previously.

"Right then." Cleo pushed out her hand, pulled it back then thrust it out again causing a fierce wind. The clouds blew away, taking the rain with them.

"Wow." They all smiled

"How...?"

"I've been practicing,"

**End Flashback**

OoOoO

_30_th__ November..._

Rikki wrapped her arms around Zane's neck as he sat down for breakfast and whispered, "Happy Birthday," in his ear.

"Thanks Rikki" she released him and brought a box wrapped in wrapping paper.

"I hope you like it," she smiled and sat down beside him.

"Wow, Rikki, you must've put a lot of effort into this."

"I did. The girls helped me find all the pictures, and take a couple," she smiled, "So you like it?"

"Definitely!" his kissed her, "I love it. Do ya wanna take a look with me?" he asked.

Five minutes later, they camped on the couch and had a look at the photo album that Rikki had created for him. There were photos from when they were fifteen â€" when they first started going out up until their wedding day, honeymoon and pictures from events since.

"Wow! We look so young!" Zane exclaimed as he looked at the first photo in the album. This was off Rikki's phone when they left the movies after one of their dates.

"We **were** young Zane," she laughed in response.

There were photos of them just as friends and as more than friends. A couple involved them kissing...they were photos of their relationship. Zane burst out laughing as he took one of the photos in. It was of them when they were fifteen; A photo of Cleo and Emma smiling into the camera. If you looked closely in the background, you could see Rikki and Zane giving each other the evils.

"Those were the days," Rikki laughed.

"Hey Rikki," Zane said when he reached the last of the photos, "Why are there spaces blank?"

"I thought that we could fill it up with future memories."

"That's a great idea," Zane replied affectionately.

"Zane, I have something else for you..."

"Hmm?" he looked up from the photos.

"These are ones to keep in a very...safe place...away from prying eyes, for your eyes only." She gave him a handful of photos.

The first was a beautiful picture of Rikki beaming in her mermaid form, a photo from the chest up, her skin glistening wet. The second was the two of them kissing at the moon pool on their anniversary when they were seventeen, the upper half of Rikki's tail showing. The third was of Anna, Ben, Rikki, Cleo, Emma and Bella as mermaids, their tails in full view. Rikki paused, "This one is for especially safe keeping," she said. The fourth was another of Rikki and Zane, kissing. This time they were underwater.

"I think that one was taken in Fiji,"

_One month later....

"No way. This can't be happening," Rikki muttered to herself.

"What can't be happening?" Zane asked as he came into the room, Rikki spun around quickly.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," She hid the object behind her back and grinned at him cheesily.

"Come on Rikki, I know you well enough, what is really wrong?"

Rikki dropped the facade and handed it over. He stared at it.

"Seriously?"

"Yup." She said in a depressed, defeated voice.

"I...wow...I wasn't expecting...this..."

"I'm sorry Zane," Rikki whispered

"Why are you sorry? This is amazing news!"

"It is?" Rikki asked hesitantly.

"Definitely!" he kissed smiling.

"So you...want it?"

"Yes! Rikki, I don't mind at all! We are in our mid twenties,"

She beamed at him, her smile faltered, "It's just...I'm not good with kids...do you think we'd make good parents?"

"I'm sure we'll get the hand of it,"

"Its...well...I never really had a good mother â€“ so I don't really know..."

"Its okay Rikki, I never had a good father and no mother to boot, we'll go through this step by step. Together."

"Really?"

"Really," he said firmly. They kissed.

**A/N: **_*Sorry it's so short, but my sister wants the computer so I can't type anymore...*_

**Keep on reviewing! Thanks!**

41. Chapter 41

Chapter 41

Bella and Will walked hand in hand through the mall.

"Hey, is that Rikki over there?" Bella asked Will.

"Maybe â€“ same build, height and hair...wait, she's wearing a pink floral shirt â€“ can't be her. Rikki never wears pink or floral things either."

"True...but let's go over and say 'hi' anyway." She said brightly.

The couple walked over to the woman.

"Rikki?"

The woman kept walking.

"Rikki?"

The woman turned around.

"Sorry, I'm not Rikki..."

"Oh, sorry, you looked like a friend of ours," said Bella

Will noticed that the woman had very similar features to their

friend.

"Sorry for bothering you," he added quickly.

"Oh, don't worry about it, "she paused, thinking, "Was that a Rikki Chadwick that you mistook me for"

"Yeah...well sort of, her name is Rikki Bennett now â€“ she recently got married."

"Oh. So she lives around here."

"Yeah..." Bella replied questioningly, "Why do you wanna know...what was your name?"

"My name is Cordeilia Carlton, used to be Chadwick" she saw their shocked expression. "Yes, you heard me right, I'm Rikki's mother. I haven't seen her since she was about ten years old. I was given a photo when she was fourteen or fifteen...it'd be nice to see her again...Anyway, it was nice to meet you..."

"Bella. This is my husband Will,"

"Nice to meet you Bella, Will. I'll probably see you around..." Cordeilia Carlton said as she walked off.

"Well that was very interesting..."

OoOoO

Rikki was serving the counter at Rikki's cafe while Zane was sorting out the accounts and the staffs' pay cheques. She saw a blonde haired woman come up to the counter. Rikki gasped and tried to maintain her composure.

"How may I help you?"

"Rikki, is that you?"

"Mum...hi..."

"You look just the same as that photo I received from when you were fifteen, just a wee bit more mature,"

"Gee thanks for the analysis Mum. Long time no see."

"Yes. Do you want to catch up?"

"Not particularly, no. You haven't really made an effort to see me over the past fifteen years, and you have only just come across me by chance. Why should I catch up with you now?" she replied icily. At this moment, Zane came out of the office to see his wife with an irritated expression talking to a woman who looked exactly like her â€“ give or take a few wrinkles.

"And who is this?" Zane asked slipping his arms around her waist.

"Zane, this is Cordeilia. Mum this is my husband Zane Bennett,"

"Nice to meet you," he said politely

"Oh my how my baby has grown up...wait how old are you now? I was never very good with ages,"

"I'm twenty-five Mum, thanks for remembering," she said sarcastically,

"How's Terry?"

"I believe he is well."

"And this is your work?"

"Yes. Zane and I own the place. If you excuse me Mother, I have customers to serve,"

"See you around," her mother said as Rikki walked away. Rikki rolled her eyes as soon as her face was turned and muttered, "I certainly hope not," under her breath.

OoOoO

"Dad?"

"Oh, hey there Rikki,"

"Guess who's in town?"

"Um, I dunno, who?"

"Ms Cordeilia Carlton,"

"What...?" he paused "So she did change her name back..."

"What do I do Dad? I don't want to have to deal with her."

"Just go along with her, go to lunch or something. She'll go away eventually, just find out why she's here,"

"Okay Dad. Bye"

"Bye"

She hung up the phone and left the office to see Zane giving a smoothie to her long lost mother. Rikki had been hoping never to see her mother again after she had walked out on her dad and consequentially Rikki also, she had left the ten year old child heartbroken and seeing her around was reopening the cracks.

Rikki, Zane and her mother all had a very awkward chat. After about ten minutes or so, without much progress being achieved, Cordeilia left the cafe. As soon as she had left Rikki stormed back into their office. Zane followed. She sat down on the couch and Zane sat down next to her. He took her hand.

"Rikki, what's wrong?"

"She's back in my life again. That is what's wrong! I told you about

her all those years ago "remember our first proper kiss?"

"Yeah," he said dreamily, "unforgettable moment." He brought himself back to reality, "I can see why you are stressed though. Let's leave the cafe to the staff for this afternoon and go home for some relaxation."

"Okay then Zane." She rested her head on his chest and Zane put his arms around her.

OoOoO

"Hey Will!" Cleo said as she saw him walk into the Marine Park. He didn't respond. She walked quickly to catch up with him "having a baby on board did not help.

"Hey, Will. What's with the thoughtful face?" she waved a hand in front of his eyes.

He blinked, "Oh, sorry Cleo, just deep in thought."

"Nothing too serious I hope?"

"No, I don't think so,"

"So what was it?"

"Oh, Bella and I met Rikki's mother yesterday..."

"Mother...? Rikki...?" she asked in disbelief

"Yup, looks just like her too. Same hair, build...she's just an older version of Rikki."

"Never in all the years I've known Rikki, have I even heard her mention her mother...but I knew that was because her parents were divorced, that's probably why,"

"Yeah...we'll ask about her later..."

They got back to work.

"Hey, Will, do ya think you'll be able to cope here without me?"

"What?"

"Maternity leave..."

"Oh, right, yeah, I think I'll be able to cope,"

"That's good then," she smiled at him and they resumed their work.

42. Chapter 42

Chapter 42

That night, Rikki and Zane's house....

"Hello? Rikki speaking,"

"Hello Rikki dear,"

"Mum. How on earth did you get my phone number?" she said through clenched teeth. Zane looked up, realising who she was speaking to.

"Easy darling, I used the phone book..."

"So you're stalking me now?"

"I'm not a stalker, I'm your mother."

"Oh really. So why are you showing so much interest in me now after so long?"

"Well, I was in the neighbourhood and thought I'd catch up..."

Rikki was fuming silently her free hand clenching and unclenching into a fist. The room started to get uncomfortably warm. Zane got up and grabbed her hand, forcing it open gently. She covered the mouthpiece.

"Sorry Zane...I...should be more careful."

"It's alright," he replied.

"Oh, what was that?"

Apparently, Rikki's mother had been talking about the latest fashion and monetary things while Rikki had been talking to Zane.

"Mother, I really couldn't care less,"

"Oh, you are being very rude Rikki,"

"If you'll excuse me, I would like to end his conversation now."

"But what about dinner?"

"What about it?"

"I could come over and we could have a family catch up!" Cordeilia said excitedly

"No way hosea, you are most certainly not coming over for dinner. Good bye!" Rikki quickly hung up and placed the phone back on the receiver. Zane put his arms around her, this she warmly welcomed. She sighed.

"We should never have put our address and number in the phone book,"

Later on...

There was a knock on the door. Rikki opened it with a smile. This soon faded as she saw who it was. She plastered a fake smile on her

face.

"Mum! What are you doing here?"

"I've come for dinner."

"I thought I said you couldn't come for dinner," Rikki said through clenched teeth. "You just don't give up do you?"

"No, not really. Can I come in,"

"I guess so, if you must," Rikki sighed in defeat.

"Oh, this is so exciting." Rikki's mother said, "Here's your handsome young man...Zach was it?"

"It's Zane, and you're Cordeilia," he interrupted.

"Yes, that I am," she laughed.

For dinner Rikki served up spaghetti bolognaise to her husband and reluctantly to her mother who just kept smiling as if nothing was wrong. The meal was silent until Cordeilia spoke.

"So, your cafe is going well?"

"Yes, it's good,"

"So I'm guessing you earn a lot of money,"

"Yeah, we have a decent wage...what are you getting at?" Zane asked cautiously.

"Well, I was hoping you could spare a few dollars..."

"I knew it!" Rikki exclaimed, "You are relentless! Even before you left us it was all about the money,"

"But surely, you could spare some money for me, your mother? I know that you have married into a wealthy family Rikki..."

"You know what? I think you should leave," Zane announced sensing Rikki's unease.

"Really? But we have so much to discuss!"

"No. We do not. Leave now." Zane said firmly.

"I tell you what, if you give me a specific sum of money, I will be gone."

"How much are we talking?" Rikki asked hesitantly

"Hmmm, \$1000?"

"Done." Zane said

"Zane!"

Zane pulled out his wallet and wrote her a \$1000 cheque.

"Thank you my dear," she got up. "It was nice to see you again Rikki. I will see you again...sometime in the future...but then again...maybe not," she left. As soon as the door had closed, Rikki turned to Zane.

"What was that! You just gave away \$1000 of our hard-earned money to my good-for-nothing mother!"

"Don't worry Rikki. It got her out of our hair! With our income and inheritance, it won't even make the slightest dent in our savings, we won't miss it. Besides, I knew how uncomfortable you were with her around."

Rikki visibly relaxed.

"Thanks Zane, I don't know how much longer I could take with her around."

"You're welcome," he kissed her cheek.

43. Chapter 43

Chapter 43

They finished eating and cleared their dishes away. Zane washed as usual. If Zane was away Rikki tended to use the dishwasher cautiously, but somehow she always managed to transform.

Rikki slipped her arms around Zane's waist as he washed the dishes. Every time one was placed on the bench, Rikki would steam dry it and put it away, and then resume hugging Zane. Once they were done, Rikki dried the bench and put the remaining dishes away, as was the regular procedure of dishwashing at the Bennett's house.

After this they sat down on the couch, Zane's arm slung over Rikki's shoulders.

"Zane?"

"Yeah?"

"I'm scared,"

Zane turned to her shocked; it just wasn't like Rikki to admit something like that.

"'Bout what?" he asked concerned

"The baby..." she looked down at her fidgeting hands.

"Rikki, Rikki, look at me," he gently tilted her chin up to look him in the eye. "We'll be fine. If your that worried I'll take you to Lewis for a check up or something..."

"I'm not really too worried about the health side of things...its more the fact that I have no idea how to be a mother...and besides he's in New Zealand..."

"But still, I would still take you over,"

"That's sweet of you, but how about we just call?" Rikki suggested,

"Or, we could just do that," Zane replied and then kissed her lovingly.

OoOoO

"Hello? Lewis McCartney speaking,"

"Hey Lewis,"

"Rikki, how are you doing?"

"Pregnant."

"Oh...kay...?"

"Look Lewis I need your help or advice...I'm just really worried."

"Have you talked to Cleo or Bella yet?" They're both going through what you are..."

"As a matter of fact...no... I have not - I kinda forgot to tell them yesterday...I will soon though, maybe tomorrow morning,"

"Okay then. So what were you worried about"

"Just...the whole thing,"

"Well, before I give you any advice, how about you go to Cleo or Bella and talk with them, I know admitting you have a weakness is hard for you but you have to..."

There was an annoyed silence on the other end of the line, he could almost imagine Rikki's icy stare.

"Well anyway," he continued, "talk to the others before me in terms of advice, besides Cleo knows everything that I do â€“ except how to use the ultra sound machine â€“ I taught the other guys how to do that before I left."

"Okay Lewis, I'll talk to them."

"Good, good,"

Another annoyed silence. Lewis was glad he was in another country because he didn't want to mess with an annoyed Rikki.

"Bye Lewis." She hung up.

OoOoO

'_Knock Knock'_

Cleo put the magazine down, got up from the couch, and went to the door.

"Hey Rikki," Cleo smiled, "Come in,"

Rikki walked into the lounge and looked over at the kitchen; she did a double take.

"Wow Cleo; that is a **lot** of dishes!"

"Yeah...about that, without Lewis here, I haven't bothered to wash them...I didn't want to transform..."

"Let me help you,"

Cleo looked at Rikki Quizzically. At Rikki's orders, they moved some of the dishes into the sink and Rikki put the plug in.

"Are you sure?"

"Trust me Cleo." Rikki bumped the tap handle swiftly and got the water running into the sink. She heated it up with her power and then turned the tap off once the sink was full. She then grabbed the tea towel and used it around the detergent bottle to squirt some into the water cautiously.

"Cleo, use your magical water thingy and mix it around." Cleo did so. "Now move it around the plates...not like that...wash them â€“ move it up and down...use the water to grip that scrubbing cloth and use that..." Rikki boiled the water as Cleo moved it around the plates, sanitising them.

"Okay, now use your power to lift those dishes out of the sink and place them on the bench..." Cleo did this also. Rikki grabbed the tea towel again carefully pushing the remaining dishes into the sink. Once all of them were done Rikki said to Cleo,

"Now, pull the plug out."

"But I'll get wet!"

"With your powers," Rikki told her impatiently

"Oh...right..." Cleo lifted the plug out inside a bubble of water. The water gurgled down the drain.

"Okay, now it's my turn." Rikki dried the remaining dishes and then the two of them put them all away.

"Why did I never think of that?"

"Because I'm smarter than you... kidding! Na, it is just as well I did cos you'd be living in a dirty dishes pile until Lewis comes back otherwise."

They returned to the couch.

"So Rikki, why did you want to see me?"

Rikki's confidence seemed to waver for a second.

"Well...I happen to be..." she saw Cleo's coaxing expression,

"Pregnant,"

"Oh my gosh! This is awesome!" Cleo hugged her tightly.

"Let...me...breathe"

"Oh, sorry," Cleo released her hold.

"Anyway, I'm kinda worried about it and Lewis said to go to you for help first..."

"Oh...so what are you worried about?"

"Just the whole thing... like how I'm going to cope with being a parent for one, you know that I'm not too good with kids..."

Cleo and Rikki talked about what to expect in pregnancies and Cleo encouraged her greatly, and told her not to worry. Their discussion lasted a long time...

**A/N: **_*Keep on reviewing, feel free to tell me what you think about the story :D*_

**Thanks :P**

44. Chapter 44

Chapter 44

A knock sounded at the door.

"I'll get it," Rikki said, and went to the door. "Zane! What are you doing here?"

"Well, you had been gone for three hours and I hadn't heard from you..."

Rikki checked her watch.

"Oh, you're right,"

She let Zane in; she had seen his relieved expression. "Aw, Zane, you've been worried, haven't you?" Rikki said as if she was talking to a small boy. He looked down sheepishly,

"Well, I'm alright as you can see...i do appreciate your concern though," Rikki said smiling. She kissed him on the cheek.

"Hey Cleo,"

"Hey Zane,"

Rikki sat down on one of the couches, Zane sitting closely next to her. He grabbed her hand and their fingers intertwined.

'Beep Beep'

Cleo got up and went to the computer in the corner of the room.

"Hey Sweetheart," Lewis' voice came over the Skype.

"Lewis! I miss you so much! I thought you were going to call later?"

"I missed you too much Cleo,"

"Aw,"

"I love you so much,"

"I love you much more..."

"ACHEM!" Rikki walked into the camera. "Tone it down a little guys, I'll be scarred for life!"

"Oh...Hi Rikki...and Zane," Lewis said. "I see you took my advice Rikki,"

"Yeah, thanks Lewis,"

"What advice?" Zane asked

"To talk to Cleo about her pregnancy and worries,"

"Oh, so that's why it took three hours!"

The foursome chatted for another hour.

"Sorry guys, gotta go now, we're going to swim with the dolphins around here. I hope we swim with some hectors!" Lewis said, "I'll call you again tonight Cleo,"

"Okay Lewis, I love you,"

"Love you too," Cleo blew him a kiss just as he went offline.

"I miss him so much," Cleo sighed, in answer to this Rikki hugged her promptly.

"So, you guys wanna drink? Hot? Cold?" Cleo asked,

"Could I have a coffee?" Zane and Rikki asked at the same time. They looked at each other and laughed.

"You guys are so similar when it comes to food and drinks," Cleo laughed,

Rikki went into the kitchen, "Hey Cleo, want me to boil the kettle? It'd be a lot quicker...yours always takes so long..."

"Okay, that'd be great,"

Rikki boiled it in a few seconds and all their drinks were ready in a flash. As soon as Zane had finished his he looked at his watch.

"Oh, sorry ladies, gotta go â€“ lunch break is over," Rikki stood up, ready to leave.

"Rikki, you can stay here if you want, we have enough staff,"

"Oh, thanks Zane," she kissed him on the cheek.

"Isn't that worth another kiss as well?" he asked hopefully gesturing to his other cheek.

"Don't push your luck Zane," Rikki said smirking. Zane mock pouted,

"I still get a proper goodbye though?" he asked

"Alright then." She said giving in. She kissed him on the lips lovingly.

"Much better Rikki," Zane smiled. She playfully punched him on the arm, and then he left the house.

"You guys are so cute!" Cleo exclaimed once he had left,

"Shut up," Rikki told her jokingly.

"I should probably head back to the cafe now," Rikki said after another while of chatting. She got up and went to the door.

"See ya tomorrow," she said

"Okay, see ya," Cleo smiled in reply.

Back at the cafe, a disaster unfolded as Rikki walked in.

"What on earth is going on here?" she yelled, her voice getting everyone to stop and turn. The group of people parted. Two teenage boys were in the centre of the crowd covered in bruises, juice and Rikki did not want to know what else. There were a couple of splintered chairs and a broken table. They had obviously been in a fight.

"What happened here?" she asked softly but menacingly.

One of the staff spoke up from behind her. "These boys were fighting and we couldn't get them to leave,"

"It's okay Rhonda." Rikki told her comfortingly. All the staff of the day were petite and female - not exactly the material of getting rid of two fighting fifteen year old boys especially with a crowd egging them on.

"Where is Zane?" Rikki demanded.

"I don't know, maybe he's in the office?"

Rikki frowned then turned back to the boys who had resumed pushing each other. She got between them, her strength surprising them as she pushed them apart with ease.

"Outside. Now. We need to have a talk." Seeing her angry expression, the boys hurried outside.

The crowd had been watching the whole thing, talking in

whispers.

"Don't you have better things to do with your time?" she asked them. They murmured between themselves. "Well?" They dispersed slowly.

As she came outside to talk with the boys, she saw them squabbling again.

"Oi! Will you give it a rest?" she said pulling them apart again. They looked at her sheepishly.

"So, what was this all about?" she was answered by silence. "How'd it start?" she looked at them intensely. They looked terrified. Rikki had not realised that she could be so scary. Apparently she had a reputation for sorting out the fights in the cafe. The public were more scared of messing with her than Zane. She felt like laughing at their expressions, but she restrained herself, keeping up the facade. "Well?" she asked again.

"It was...it was over this Mrs Bennett," one of them spoke up sheepishly handing her a roll of money accompanied by an old gaming console. The other glared at him.

"Over this? Why is this such a big deal?" she asked them condescendingly.

"He bet that he could beat me in a race. He bet me this much," The first boy said gesturing to the money and console.

"And i'm guessing that he didn't win?"

"No. He owes me that,"

"No I don't! You cheated!" At this the two resumed fighting.

"HEY!" They turned back to Rikki. "it was just a race. Now, how old are you? Like five? This is a big deal over nothing. Are you going to sort this over civilly or not?"

They glared at each other. "I'm guessing not. So how about we compromise. "One of them was about to protest but stopped himself.

"So, there's about \$20 bucks here right?" they nodded. "So, there are two options. Someone has the console and someone has the money. Or, one person gets 5 bucks and the console, and the other gets the rest of the money."

"The first one." They said at the same time.

"Okay then. So who wants the money?"

They both wanted it. "Oh brother," she sighed. Okay then, how about I decide,"

"Fine." They said in defeat.

She pulled out a coin. "Tails console, heads money, understood? You flip it," she gestured to the second boy. "What it lands on, is what you get."

"Okay," He flipped it. "It's tails..."

"Okay then. Here you are," she passed him the console and the other the money. "Now, get out of my hair and cafe, if I see you as much as push each other again, you'll be out for good. Understood?"

She received solemn nods. "Good, good,"

Once she had dealt with the boys, she went back inside. The staff were dutifully clearing up.

"Hey, Rhonda, get a mop onto that would you?"

"Sure thing Rikki,"

She continued to the Manager's office to see if Zane was there. She heard muffled voices coming from behind the door, confused she opened it. There she saw Anita and Zane kissing...

45. Chapter 45

Chapter 45

Rikki's P.O.V

I cannot believe what I am seeing. He promised me nothing was going on!

"HOLY HELL ZANE!" I shouted at him, my voice cracking. "WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON HERE?"

My cheating husband of... I think it is about 5 months...pushed that evil Anita woman off him.

"Rikki," he pleaded. I had had enough of all this, I cannot believe it not again!

"No. Save it Zane! That is the last straw!" I stormed out of the room, the tears I had been holding back finally breaking over the dam, streaming down my cheeks. I knew exactly where I was going.

Zane's P.O.V

No, no, no!

"Anita! You just cost me the love of my life, my marriage and probably my child along with it all! Get out! I never want to see you again. Remember that promise...if you do not, I will personally hunt you down and...Well use your imagination, my father has some pretty powerful people just a call away. I'm going to make sure you can never enter this cafe again."

Anita's jaw dropped but she quickly recovered herself.

"But we really hit it off, you can't look me in the eye and say that you didn't enjoy that. Why didn't you push me off straight away!"

I can't believe she was pulling these cards out on me!

"It was a deal!"

"Oh, true...but still!"

I could never hurt Rikki like this!

"Get out." I said again. I ferried her out the door and out of the cafe. Then I told the staff not to let her back in. I put my hands on my head. What have I done! This was the better option though, wasn't it?

_**Flashback **__(Normal P.O.V)_

Zane was working at his desk when someone slipped in.

He assumed it was Rikki, and without looking up he said, "Hey Rikki, can you make me a juice?"

"Sorry, not Rikki, but I can offer you something else..." she said seductively. At this Zane looked up quickly to see who it was. He recognised that voice.

"Anita. What the hell are you doing back here?"

"Just thought I'd see you again..."

"Leave. Now."

"Not until I get what I want."

"And what would that be?"

"A kiss from you..."

"Nuh uh. It ain't happening,"

"You so sure about that?" she slipped an envelope across his desk.

He opened it, looking at Anita quizzically.

He gasped. "Where on earth did you get this from?"

"I have my methods..."

"You're blackmailing me. Seriously? For a kiss?"

"Mmhmm. As long as you kiss me for a decent amount of time...let's say over five seconds, then your wife's secret stays safe with me, I won't breathe a word" she smiled slyly. Her cheeky face turned serious for a split second, "And I never, ever break my promises, unless absolutely necessary, but I don't think this time counts as necessary..." She resumed smiling.

"But how the heck did you get hold of this? This was my birthday present!"

"Let's just say I came into your office yesterday and opened one of

your files, and wouldn't you know it! It was there!" He put his hands on his head, deep in thought. He should have been more careful. The rest were hidden around their home.

'Thank God she didn't get hold of the rest of them.' Zane thought, 'What's more important, Rikki's safety or a kiss. A kiss that could jeopardise my marriage...Rikki is much more important.'

The picture that Anita had was the one of him and Rikki kissing underwater. Rikki, as a mermaid.

"Okay, I agree. As long as you give me that photo. If you so much as breathe a word..."

"I promise, I promise. Though I don't see why this is such a big deal!"

"It's not a big deal for you but for me it is! This could be counted as having an affair! It will break Rikki's heart if she finds out."

"Do you want her secret to be safe or not?" she asked snidely. She knew she held all the cards.

"Fine, fine. I'll kiss you. Let's get this over with." He stood up and went over to Anita's side of the desk. He leaned in and she puckered her lips. Nearer the end of the kiss the door opened, and Rikki stood there horrified, staring at her kissing husband.

"HOLY HELL ZANE!" he heard her shout. He pushed Anita away rudely. The deal had been kept. A five second kiss.

"Rikki," he pleaded.

"No. Save it Zane. That is the last straw." She stormed out of the room, tears streaming down her cheeks.

**End flashback**

This brought Zane back to the current moment. He had screwed it up big time. Was it worth keeping her secret safe? He pushed the photo into the coat pocket as thought raced through his brain. Was it worth the love of his life?

"Geez! What do I do!" he mumbled to himself. "She's never going to forgive me this time."

He got the staff to man the cafe and raced to his boat. He had quite a good idea as to where she might be.

A/N: **_please review :D thanks**_

46. Chapter 46

Chapter 46

Loud sobs could be heard echoing throughout the moon pool cavern. Zane had never heard Rikki cry like that, ever. He her small form crouched up against one of the cave walls, her knees to her chest,

her hands covering her face, her body shaking.

"Rikki?"

She stopped crying, wiped her eyes and gave him an icy stare that would have stopped a bullet.

"GO AWAY!" she shouted - her voice was on the edge of breaking.

"Please let me explain,"

"Zane," she said tearfully, "This sort of thing has happened too much! Miriam, Sophie and Anita... How do think this makes me feel? I mean, how could you think that I could possibly trust you anymore?"

"Rikki, I see your extremely valid point," he sat down beside her, she moved away slightly. He sighed, "All I'm asking for is a chance to explain," his eyes settled upon her hand.

"Rikki? Where is your ring?"

"Dunno." She mumbled. He spotted it on the far side of the cave. She had obviously thrown it there.

"Rikki," he began, brushing a curl behind her ear. She slapped his hand away. "This was all a misunderstanding..."

"I think I read it clearly..."

"Just let me explain,"

She nodded slightly, giving him the permission.

"Okay. She knows about...you know...She blackmailed me."

"How on earth...! With what?" she exclaimed before clamping a hand over her mouth.

"I'm glad you're speaking to me again,"

She shot him another evil look.

He took out the photo from his coat pocket and showed it to her.

"She came into the office with this picture, and said that if I kissed her then she would keep your secret." Rikki gasped now understanding the gravity of where what he was saying was going. "At the time I thought making sure your mermaid identity was secret was the better option...but now..." Zane continued trailing off.

"Now what?"

"I don't know...Rikki it was the only way of protecting you, even if it meant sacrificing our relationship for your safety. If I kissed her, she'd keep the secret, that was the deal. It was that simple," he pleaded

"It's okay Zane I understand your reasoning but...it's just... I expected more from you, I really did not expect to walk in on my **husband** kissing someone else,"

"It meant nothing!"

"I'm glad to see a kiss means so little to you Zane; you're my husband for goodness sake! A kiss should mean something!"

"Okay, I'll rephrase that. I** love you **Rikki, I would never hurt you intentionally. I had to keep you safe, no matter the consequences."

Rikki was touched by the passion in his voice as he said this.

"I...don't know what to do. I love you so much, but I can't ignore what I saw! Besides, how do you know she is actually going to keep the secret? Huh? How do you know she's not going to tell?"

"If she doesn't have the photo, then no one will believe her. I could always take her to court; she did break and enter our office to steal it..." he paused. "Please Rikki, I'm begging you, forgive me?"

She sighed, mulling over decisions in her brain. Zane looked at her tensely.

"Zane, you have one more chance."

He kissed her firmly, "You won't regret this," he looked at her relieved

"I'd better not..." she said warily.

Zane offered her his hand to help her up. She took it and he took this as an opportunity to swing her into a tight hug, the slight bulge of her pregnant belly pressing into his abdomen. After a few seconds, she pushed him away smiling and blushing. He took her hand, went to the other side of the cave, and picked something up. He knelt,

"Rikki, I love you so much, please forgive me," he slipped her ring back to where it belonged, "I thought you may want this back,"

"Yeah...sorry...thanks,"

"I'm the one who is sorry, I love you..."

"Zane, this is just way too cheesy," Rikki stopped him smiling. "I love you...damn too much, but how can I trust you?"

"Let me make it up to you,"

"How?"

"I'll find a way."

He smiled at her and they leaned in to kiss lovingly. She pulled away and dived into the moon pool. He looked shocked. Her tear-stained

cheeks now washed clean. She smiled but then looked at him seriously.

"Zane, you are extremely lucky that I'm not leaving you. There better not be a next time,"

"There won't, I promise. Next time I will go straight to you for advice of how to get out of it or something,"

"That works,"

He leant down and kissed her, just as he was about to pull away she pulled his shirt and he went toppling into the pool. She laughed.

"Serves you right!"

"Hey you!" he grabbed her hand and held on tight as she tried to move away,

"Zane!"

"I'm not ever letting you go!"
>"Zane!"<p>

"Never!"

Suddenly a weird sensation came through his hand, the next second he pulled it away, his hand throbbed and it was bright red.

"You burnt me!"

"Yup. My anger is now satisfied, you are forgiven!" she smirked at him.

"I guess I deserved that," he said trying to smile, this turned into a grimace,

"Yeah, you did." She said laughing.

Rikki and Zane met up back at their home, bandaged Zane's minor burn and then the two of them went on a walk together on the beach. Rikki reached out to take his hand, but he pulled away.

"You're not going to burn me again are you?"

"No, don't worry," she smirked

He cautiously took her hand. She heated his hand again slowly, he pulled away swiftly.

She burst out laughing. "You really thought I would!" she laughed again.

"Just one of the joys of having a relationship with a fiery mermaid," He muttered to himself.

Chapter 47

A week later...

Lewis was nearly knocked over by a flying Cleo barrelling into him.

"Lewis, don't ever leave me again!"

They kissed for a long time.

"I'm not planning on it" he smiled at her, "So how's our baby doing?" he asked, gesturing to her large stomach,

"Good I think. We couldn't tell the gender, but everything is going well,"

"And how's our friends and family?"

"All doing well I think. Bella's baby is also coming along fine and Rikki is starting to show,"

"I guess some ultrasounds are due then...Hey, when were we going to go for dinner with my family?"

"That's tomorrow night I believe,"

"Let's go home then shall we?"

"Definitely,"

Lewis picked up his luggage and they made their way to the car.

Cleo was overjoyed at the return of her husband. Her baby seemed to be too "they seemed to be kicking a lot more frequently whenever Lewis was around.

_The Tomorrow Night (15__th__ of January), Lewis' Parents place..._

"Cleo, so nice to see you," Pamela McCartney gushed, "And how is our grandchild?"

"Doing well thanks Pam," she smiled.

"Come in come in, Lewis honey it's so good to see you after so long!"

"It's only been three months Mum," he replied,

"But still, sit, sit, BRIAN! THEY'RE HERE!"

Cleo giggled; Pam had always amused her.

The laid back Brian came into the room holding a TV remote,

"Pam, it's at the crucial moment of them game!"

"Too bad...give me that," Pamela went into the lounge and turned the TV off.

The family sat down to enjoy their meal.

"So Cleo, how are your dolphins going?"

"We taught them a new trick last week, however now I'm officially on maternity leave. Our baby will be due pretty soon â€“ I expect sometime next month, probably quite close to Lewis' birthday,"

"Okay then, try and keep out of mischief for the meantime," Pam said with a twinkle in her eye.

Two days later...

"Hey Lewis, Cleo," Will said as he brought Bella in for her ultrasound. He had been doing them but wanted Lewis to identify the progress properly.

"Hey!"

"Come this way," he smiled acting professional.

They returned his smiles.

"So do you guys want to know the gender?"

"Yes please," Bella said, and Will nodded.

"Okay, let me see...this won't be 100% correct but..." he zoomed in on the ultrasound, "I believe you two will be having a boy,"

They smiled at each other.

It turned out that their baby boy was doing well and would be born about a month after Cleo's baby.

"So, Lewis, have you guys decided whether you want to know the gender?"

"Well, I do and have found out but Cleo doesn't want to know, but since I did the ultrasound, I know what it is. I haven't told her though,"

"Okay,"

"I hope our kids can be great friends," said Bella to Cleo,
>"Yeah, I hope so too," she replied.<p>

One month and a few days later...

"Lewis?"

"Yeah?"

"I...I think my waters broke..."

"Oh! Ah...Okay then..."

Lewis lifted his wife up and carried her gently into the spare room bridal style. He placed her on the bed that was set up especially for

this moment.

"Okay, now all my training comes into play. Relax Cleo; I'm just going to call the others..."

A/N: If you ever wondered what happened to Emma in chapter 28, please read my new story, **'**The Full Moon's Secrets'.

Anyway, I am really sorry but I'm going to be away skiing this week and won't be uploading much. Also another setback will be that I have end of year exams coming up so I won't be updating much. I will try though. Haha. Anyway, have a great day :D

**Oh, and keep reviewing, I really do enjoy them!**

48. Chapter 48

Chapter 48

The friends came over at different points during the day, during the hours of seemingly endless contractions. Soon they became closer together and Rikki offered her hand for Cleo to grab onto â€“ Lewis was busy.

Rikki had to keep herself from cursing, as Cleo's grip was as tight as a vice and very, very painful.

"I think it's coming," Cleo managed to wheeze out.

"Oh, yeah, you're right," Lewis started to panic. Will put a reassuring hand on his shoulder. Lewis was very glad that he was there to help things along.

"Okay Cleo, you need to push," she did but raised her hand weakly and began to use her powers.

"What are you doing Cleo?" Lewis asked confused. Suddenly the baby's head emerged.

"Well...that was quick..." Will said.

A screaming baby girl was brought into the world...well...a screaming baby mermaid was...

Cleo released her grip on Rikki's hand. She rubbed her hand and gasped,

"Cleo, I didn't realise you were so strong, OW!"

"Sorry..." she winced

Lewis was staring at the mermaid in his arms with awe and love â€“ but also there was some confusion behind his eyes...

"I knew she was going to be a mermaid, but this is still a shock," he said nervously. The little girl had a pale orange tail. Lewis cleaned her and then once she was dry, she turned back into a regular newborn baby.

"Well, I sure as heck am glad that we didn't go to hospital for that

delivery..."

The proud father placed his baby girl into his wife's exhausted arms. All their friends came into see the baby. Cleo and her daughter, lying on her chest, were soon fast asleep.

OoOoO

"So, what's her name?" Anna asked

"Jennifer Raine McCartney,"

"Very pretty," Bella remarked, "It'll be my turn next month," she said.

OoOoO

Jennifer Raine McCartney looked up at her mother with large brown eyes from her cot. She had tanned skin like her mother and wisps of dirty blonde hair. She was an exact combination of Cleo and Lewis when it came to facial features. The young parents found out that it took a much longer period of time to transform, unless she was submerged up to her waist or more. When Cleo accidentally spilt some water onto Jennifer's arm, the baby didn't transform after ten seconds or even thirty. She still was not changed after about forty seconds when Cleo wiped it off. Lewis decided to run an experiment. He placed some water on Jennifer's arm and left it there. It took a whole minute for her to transform. This seemed to be a result of being half mermaid, half-human. However, when she was submerged up to her waist or higher, she transformed in about ten seconds "the same as her mother.

At a week old, Jennifer seemed a lot more mature for her age -- not in size- but she seemed to understand what was going on about her.

When Cleo had her bath, she would take Jennifer in with her and sit her on her chest. It was a curious sight to see a fully-grown and baby mermaid in a bath together.

At two weeks, she had worked out how to move her hand in such a way that she could use her powers. Two occasions showed Cleo and Lewis this for the first time.

The first was when the two of them were again in the bath together. Cleo had turned the tap off with her power when it turned on again. 'That's odd,' Cleo had thought, and she tried again. Again it turned back on. She looked down at Jennifer, who despite her years had a gummy smile and was moving her hand in the same way as her mother, imitating her actions.

"Oh my gosh Jen! You have my power!" This shriek brought Lewis into the bathroom, but Jennifer seemed to refuse to show him.

"I'll catch her in the act at some point," Lewis had smiled.

The second time was when Cleo had placed a glass of water down on the bedside table beside the cot, and was about to pick Jennifer up to breast-feed her. She stopped when she saw Jennifer's hand moving in a particular way.

"Lewis," she half whispered, he ran into the room to see water raising out of the glass.

"Our baby is doing this?"

"Yeah. It seems she is a lot more advanced intellectually than a regular human baby..."

At three weeks Jennifer could swim around the bath and hold her breathe for a long time. However, she couldn't yet roll over or walk. She still was growing the same speed as a human baby but her intellectual abilities kept increasing.

"I think we have a prodigy on our hands," Lewis had said.

**A/N: I am naughty because I uploaded this - we are leaving for skiing very soon...haha, I hope you enjoyed it, please review
**

49. Chapter 49

Chapter 49

"Are you sure we should be swimming?" Rikki asked Bella cautiously.

"Since when have you been one to turn down a swim?" Bella asked her puzzled.

"I don't know, maybe since you are due any day and we are both pregnant!"

"Relax Rikki, swimming makes my aching back feel better â€“ you'll understand when it gets closer to your time," With this Bella lowered herself gently into the water off the dock, and swam off.

"I am so going to regret this," Rikki followed reluctantly behind the determined Bella.

As they were swimming across the reef â€“ almost at Mako Island, Bella surfaced quickly.

"Rikki, I don't feel too hot..." she said

"Okay, well it's quicker to get to the moon pool, so let's go there," Bella nodded and the two of them swam off. Just as they were going through the moon pool tunnel Bella stopped abruptly, going limp. Rikki saw that she had stopped and grabbed her waist and pulled her to the surface of the moon pool. She pushed her onto the sand around the pool, her tail still dangling in the water.

"Bella, wake up," Rikki said tapping her cheek. "Ahh, what do I do!"

Bella's baby bump began to glow gold, her tail scales turning white.

"Ahhâ€| " Rikki said beginning to panic, "Bella, in case you can hear

me, I'm just going to get help," she told the unconscious young woman.

With this Rikki swam out of the cave as fast as her pregnant body would take her.

Rikki floundered around in the shallows in front of her house, not caring if anyone saw her.

"ZANE! ZANE!" she yelled frantically.

He looked out the window to see her there. He ran out of the house over the dunes towards her.

"What are you doing?" he asked her looking around

"Belâ€|Bella's in trouble!" she said breathlessly, "I think it may be the baby, go get Lewis and come over to Mako Island ASAP!"

"Okay," he replied and scrambled back up the dunes, back to their house.

"Shhh! Do you want to wake Jenny up?" Lewis whispered forcefully when he answered the door.

"Bella, is quite possibly in labour â€“ she is not in a very good wayâ€|"

"Where?'

"Mako,"

"Just a sec, I'll be right there. Go get Will, I'll meet you,"

Lewis rushed around the house grabbing his stuff. He also scribbled a note:

'_Cleo, I have gone to Mako Island to help Bella. Didn't want to wake you. I'll be back soon. Xx'_

He raced out the door to his boat and sped out to Mako Island.

In the meantime, Rikki had gotten back to the moon pool. Everything around her had turned to jelly.

"You are out of control!" Rikki said pulling her gently back into the water. The moon pool's magical qualities calmed Bella's raging powers.

"Lewis! Thank God you're here!" Rikki said as Lewis entered the cave. He took in the glowing, changing Bella and the remains of gelatine around the moon pool's rocks.

"Okay, let's pull her out," Lewis said. Rikki helped him place Bella on her back, on the soft sand of the moon pool.

When Will and Zane arrived, they both gasped.

"Oh my gosh, what's happening!" Will panicked when he took in her glowing form.

"Okayâ€| maybe it wasn't such a good idea to bring him alongâ€|" Lewis muttered to Zane. "Zane, try to calm him downâ€|"

Will began pacing.

Rikki hoisted herself out of the pool and dried herself off. She went and examined the unconscious Bella. "Shouldn't she be in her human form by now?" Rikki asked frantically, "or at least conscious?"

"I don't know!" Lewis exclaimed still trying to get to grips on the situation, "It seems even though she is completely dry, she is not transforming â€" I suspect that the baby is doing this,"

Bella's eyes opened suddenly, and she gasped, "Oh my Goodness! It hurts so much!" A shudder wracked through her body. All of a sudden, her tail fin seemed to be dividing, the scales moving apart; a very strange spectacle to watch â€" it was freaking them all out. Her upper tail was the same as normal, (except for the white scales) but the tail fin had divided in half, providing an opening that looked vaguely of legs. Unexpectedly, the glowing from her belly started moving down her tail, shining through the scales. None of them knew what it was.

"Ahh, Lewis? Is that supposed to happen?" Rikki asked wearily.

"I haven't a clue! I'm just playing this by air you know!" Lewis responded.

Will was near hysterics, pacing the room, every now and again looking over at his wife who was screaming in pain.

"ZANE! Take him out of here now!" Rikki yelled. Rikki pulled herself out of the moon pool and dried herself off quickly. The light was still moving slowly down Bella's tail. Bella screamed again as another convulsion wracked her body.

"Bella, I think I know what's going on. You need to push!" Lewis said

She obeyed his instructions and sweat beaded on her brow as she used all her energy. The light stopped moving and then started as Bella pushed. The light must have been coming from the baby. Finally, it moved the divide of the tail. One last push resulted in a head emerging from the divided tail fin.

Lewis lifted the baby out. "It's a boy!"

The newborn baby had a red scaly tail and wisps of blonde hair with sparkling blue eyes that looked up innocently. Bella smiled exhausted. Lewis washed him off in the moon pool and once he was dry, he handed him back to the proud mother.

"Will! Zane! Come in and see the baby boy!"

The proud father took him into his arms smiling. He was very relieved that his wife and son were okay.

Bella looked down at her divided tail. It was slowly, very slowly joining back, the white scales returning to their original

colour.

"Why am I not human?" Bella asked Lewis.

"I'm not...too sure..." he replied.

Will placed their son back into Bella's arms. Her worry about her tail and legs was out of her mind as she took in the sight of her beautiful baby boy.

"What's his name?" Will asked, "Which one did you choose?"

"Jacob." She replied firmly.

"Middle name?"

"Jacob Forest Benjamin"

"Forest?"

"I'll tell you later,"

"Great name," Will replied and he kissed his wife.

**A/N: **_*Hey guys, sorry 'bout the long wait! I got home from my trip last night. I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Tell me what you think about this chapter and the whole story. Please Review!

_

**For those who asked I did have a wonderful eight days skiing on the beautiful Mt Ruapehu. Have a good day!**

50. Chapter 50

Chapter 50

"So, are you going to tell me where _Forest _came from?" Will asked his wife.

Bella was now in bed at home with Jacob lying on her chest.

"Oh, right. Well my grandfather's name was Forest. He was the only one I ever told about my mermaidness â€“ he lived in Ireland. I think he kept me sane and safe. He helped me to protect my secret. Anyway he passed away a few years back...I hope you don't mind...It's kinda like a remembrance?"

"No, no it's fine. Besides, _Forest _is fitting â€“ he was born on Mako Island," Will said smiling.

"True! I never thought of it that way,"

OoOoO

Anna and Ben swam swiftly hand in hand unfazed that they were swimming at about 90km/h, a moderate speed for mermaids. To them it felt like they were swimming at a normal pace, but to any onlookers all they would see would be bubbles. The mermaid and merman swam into the moon pool. They sat off the ledge still holding hands, their tails

against each other, red and gold.

After a long pause of looking into each other's eyes, Ben spoke out of the blue.

"Anna, I was wondering, that maybe...maybe you would like to marry me,"

Anna looked at him shocked, but soon her expression turned into joy and she beamed at him,

"Of course I would!" They kissed.

"I would give you a ring...but I haven't bought one yet...Do you want to choose?"

"Okay, sure." She replied smiling.

"Wait a second." Ben reached out his hand and began to mould something. "Close your eyes,"

"Okay, they are closed," Anna said puzzled but smiling.

He moulded the water into the shape of a ring and then froze it in place. "You can open them,"

Ben slid the ice ring onto Anna's slender finger. "Wow. Thanks."

"That's just to make it seem official." The ice started to melt against Anna's naturally warm skin.

"Don't worry if it melts, it's inevitable," Ben laughed as he saw Anna's grimace as she saw it melting. "Do you want to choose a real one now?"

"Sure," she nodded enthusiastically and they both ducked under the water to swim back to the mainland. As she swum the remnants of the ice ring disappeared into the water that it was made from.

OoOoO

The doorbell chimed as Anna and Ben walked into the Jewellers.

"Hi, could we have a look at the rings?"

"Sure thing," the shopkeeper unlocked the cabinet and pulled out a tray of assorted rings with jewels from diamonds to rubies to sapphires.

"For a special occasion?" the old man asked with a twinkle in his eye, giving an intentional look to the young woman accompanying him who was examining all the rings with interest.

"Yes sir. We are choosing her engagement ring,"

"Ben, Ben, could I have this one?" Anna asked gesturing to a ring with a small emerald.

"If that's the one you want..."

She nodded firmly smiling.

Ben paid the man and slipped the ring onto Anna's finger.

"Wanna go for another swim?" Anna asked

"Definitely," they left the mall and dived into the water. Curiously enough the ring stayed on her finger during the transformation as her moon pool gem necklace that had been made for her soon after she joined the group.

When they entered the moon pool Emma and Rikki were there.

"Hey guys, what's the haps?" Rikki asked casually as the couple came to sit on a ledge. Rikki's stomach was getting gradually bigger and she was feeling the tiring effects of pregnancy while swimming.

Anna showed them her finger.

"Wow! Congrats!" Emma exclaimed hugging them both awkwardly â€“ her tail getting in the way.

Rikki was in thought, "Hey guys, do you think that if you have kids...will they be fully mermaid? Our kids will all be half..."

"Probably,"

"I doesn't faze me," Anna said

"Neither," Ben said.

"So, when did you propose Ben?"

"A few hours ago,"

"That's...recent," Rikki laughed. She paused, "Hey, do you wanna crash Cleo's house? She's been tied down with Jennifer and I don't think Bella is up to chatting...newborns must be heaps of hard work!"

"Okay," Anna agreed

"Isn't that a little rude...?" Emma began

"Come on Em, I'm sure they won't mind. Besides, I'm due for an ultrasound today â€“ I'll stop by and get Zane and meet you guys there," Rikki interrupted.

"Okay," Emma said hesitantly.

The friends departed the moon pool.

**PLEASE REVIEW! Thanks **

Chapter 51

Cleo was breastfeeding Jennifer when the gang walked in, Zane in tow. Cleo had decided to work at the marine park only half time in order to be home more for Jennifer.

"Lewis," Cleo shouted, "Rikki's here for her ultrasound!"

Lewis came down the stairs with his equipment.

"Oh, hey everyone!" The group made themselves at home collapsing on the couches.

"Rikki, want to come into the spare room please?" he asked in a professional tone.

"Sure thing," she responded in the same way.

Everyone laughed and Zane followed them in.

Lewis placed the gel onto Rikki's stomach and began moving it around.

"That is some cold gel. I expect it every time but it still shocks me!" Rikki exclaimed. Ten seconds later, she had a tail.

He continued moving the gel and looked up at the screen.

"Hey, I can't be sure...but it looks like you have twins..."

"TWINS!" Rikki shouted. All the friends could hear her from the other room and sat up, peeling their ears to hear more.

"Yeah...see those two separate objects...there's a head. Wow looks like those are their tails," Lewis said gesturing to the screen.

"But...how are we going to cope with two at once!" she exclaimed

"I'm sure we'll manage," Zane replied, "We could set up a nursery in part of our office if you want so we can take them to work with us,"

"Sounds like a plan,"

"Rikki, this will probably make your stomach increase in size more, more than Cleo's and Bella's stomachs did," Lewis informed her.

"Great! I'll be really fat."

"Pregnant is not fat. Besides, I am sure when you start swimming again after the birth you'll go back to your original size â€“ your body is very strong. That is what keeps you young,"

Rikki nodded remembering those notes of Denman's that they had uncovered. She paused in thought.

"Hey, that'll mean that when my kids are twenty, I'll look just a little older than them! That's just going to embarrassing,"

Lewis laughed at her remark, though it would most probably be the outcome.

OoOoO

Jacob Forest Benjamin was a very happy and healthy baby boy. Soon Bella and Will had found out the same things as Cleo and Lewis had.

Jacob was a merman and had the same change time as Jennifer. Jacob had a reddish tinged tail — this was a little lighter than Ben's. They found out their baby was intellectually advanced and he figured out his power relatively quickly. He had his mother's power with a twist. He could turn water into jelly and harden it, however he could also make the hardened gelatine substance so it could stretch — like elastic, this twist was a surprise to everyone.

Will and Bella were very proud of their son. Bella had quit her job so that she could look after Jacob more intimately and Will brought in their income. Despite this, it seemed not to make a dent in their living style.

OoOoO

When Jennifer was three months old and Jacob was two months, Cleo and Bella decided to take their prodigies (who both could swim very well already in the bathtub) swimming with them in the ocean. The mothers swam their babies very slowly over to Mako Island and the Moon Pool. They swam along the surface their babies lying on their backs as they did so. They decided to dry off on the beach and walk to the moon pool, as they did not want to risk anything by swimming their children through the deep tunnel. They sat them on the sand and proceeded to slip into the pool transforming before soon after taking their charges in and sitting them on the step (they had already recently learnt to sit up)

Jacob and Jennifer continued, much to their mother's surprise, to push of the step with their miniature tails and swim around the pool.

Bella and Cleo looked at each other shocked but smiling. After all, they were the offspring of mermaids.

OoOoO

Bella and Cleo let the little mermaid and merman slowly swim beside them, watching them like a hawk, on their way back to the mainland. They were both pleased and shocked at their children's progress. They said their goodbyes and left to walk back home.

"Lewis! I'm home! Guess what?"

He emerged from the study, "What?" he said and proceeded to kiss his wife.

"Jen can swim all by herself! ALREADY! Isn't that amazing? She's three months old, can't walk but can swim perfectly,"

"Wow." He looked at his baby girl with a new light.

A/N: **_Please review! I'd like to know how many people read my story Thank you**_

**:)
>_

52. Chapter 52

Chapter 52

A few weeks later, Lewis and Cleo's house...

"Yeah that's..."

A phone ringing interrupted their talk.

"Hello? Lewis McCartney speaking,"

Cleo wondered who it was, she saw Lewis paling.

"Okay- bring her right over, see you soon" he hung up.

"Who was that?" she asked her husband.

"Zane. Rikki's in labour," he replied seriously

Cleo gasped and got the message. She placed Jennifer in her crib and helped Lewis to get the room ready for a mermaid delivery.

Rikki arrived at the McCartney's house carried bridal style by Zane into the delivery room. At first she had protested saying she could manage herself, however soon gave in to Zane's pestering for her to let him help her " she was in a lot of pain and probably couldn't manage the walk - she would not admit that he was right.

Rikki hadn't been swimming for the past week as she did not want to have the same traumatising delivery as Bella in mermaid form. She wanted a stress-less (well as stress-less as a birth can be) delivery " like Cleo had, in human form.

"God this is painful!" she yelled unceremoniously as she lay on the bed. She clenched Zane's hand as her contractions progressed.

"Ahh! Rikki, you're burning me!" Zane said

"Sorry," she released his hand quickly. He pulled his hand away quickly trying to sooth the pain.

"It's okay Rikki,"

Her contractions began getting closer together.

"Rikki, we need you to push," Lewis instructed her.

She did. The room started to heat up again. Once more her friends noticed that she was clenching and unclenching her fists. Zane put

his hand over hers, peeling her fingers apart, releasing her power. She gave him an apologetic smile that turned into a grimace and a wince quickly when another contraction hit.

"You're almost there," Lewis encourage.

Rikki yelled again with pain.

A head appeared. "Keep going!"

A baby mermaid emerged and Lewis placed her into Zane's arms for him to wash and dry. Zane almost freaked at the sight of his daughters tiny tail.

"Here comes the second one!" It came out easier and quicker than the first child did.

"It's another girl. Rikki you have two beautiful baby mermaids,"

Rikki smiled at them exhausted. When the second little girl was washed and dried, Lewis placed her in her mother's arms while Zane held onto the first child.

"So Rikki, what are we naming them?"

"What do you think of Leila and Charlie?"

"Perfect," Zane replied smiling, "So, which is which â€“ you can decide,"

"Okay...how about the one you are holding can be Charlie and the one I am holding is Leila."

"Sweet" he smiled at her again. "So what about middle names?"

"I didn't' think that far..."

"Neither..."

"I guess we'll have to figure that out later on," Rikki commented

"Thanks Lewis, for helping us out," Zane said

"Don't mention it," Lewis replied smiling.

OoOoO

Zane drove Rikki and his newborn twins home. As soon as she got there, Rikki collapsed into bed hoping for a long sleep. However this would not be. First, the babies began crying and the new parents finally figured out that they needed feeding. Cleo came over right away and showed Rikki how. Lewis also came over to chat with Zane who was also confused with the fathering thing. Rikki was handling it all very well for someone who 'hated' kids. It seemed as if she did not hate them so much anymore. Zane was not freaking out as much as he thought he would be. It looked as if they'd be promising parents. Then once the girls had quietened down, all the friends and family came to see the new children. Terry saw that Rikki was very tired and

ferried everyone out of the room with Zane's help to let her sleep after all deliveries take a lot out of you.

The girls cooed over the babies and the guys congratulated Zane. It seemed Jennifer and Jacob would have more friends their age later on.

A few days later...

"We really need to give our kids middle names," Rikki said to Zane as they lay in bed that night.

"Yeah..."

"How about we name them quickly â€“ whatever comes to mind first â€“ has to be a girl's name that fits though. I mean, middle names aren't used overly much,"

"Yeah okay,"

"So, think of a name."

They thought and then Rikki said "Mary," and Zane said "Allison,"

"Okay, so which girl gets which?" Rikki asked.

"Leila Mary? Charlie Allison?"

"Sounds good."

So, in the end the twin girls were,

Leila Mary Bennett and Charlie Allison Bennett

OoOoO

A few months later...

"WHAT?" Anna shouted into the phone. She listened to the speaker, "I'll be right there,"

Anna packed up her stuff and knocked on her boss' office door.

"Mr Preston?" she asked cautiously,

"Come in," came the booming response.

Warren Preston was a large man with bushy eye brows and a large wart on the end of his chin. He was a very powerful man â€“ he was head of a large architectural firm (which Anna Matthews worked at) and many other smaller businesses.

"Sit," he said gesturing to the chair in front of his desk. Anna sat.

"Sir, could I possibly get the afternoon off..."

"What possibly for deary?" he interrupted

"I was getting to that," she mumbled

"Speak up girl!" Preston boomed

"My fiancÃ© has had a serious accident at that building site he's been working on...I really need to see him. Please sir?"

Warren Preston had always had a soft spot for Anna.

"Okay but you better be here pronto tomorrow morning,"

"Deal, sir, yes sir, thanks so much sir,"

"Well, leave then!"

"Thank you, sir"

Anna got up with her briefcase, hurried down to her car, and drove off to Ben's building site.

Meanwhile at the building site....

Ben was in agony. His chest and lower body was ringing with pain. A beam pressed into his chest, another across his legs, bricks and wood covered his body restricting his breathing. He could not see the light of day; he was completely trapped. How did he get there? He was on a scaffolding one minute, the next minute he was falling and now...well now he was trapped under a pile of debris. What had happened? Darkness took over as he lost consciousness.

From above it looked as if an earthquake had taken place. In reality however a construction worker had lost control of his bulldozer crashing into the scaffolding Ben was on and then into a brick wall. Bricks and wood from the collapsed scaffolding fell down, Ben amongst it. He however did not have a clue of what had happened. One minute he was laying bricks for the third floor wall and then he was buried. An emergency team was working away, trying to get to Ben and a few other men who had been up there with him.

Anna arrived at the scene, panicking at the terrible sight of debris, a pile that under she knew her fiancÃ© was trapped with a few other men.

"Are they all right?"

"We don't know. Sorry."

Two men were pulled from the disaster zone, covered in gashes and moaning with pain, they were sent off in ambulances. Finally, Ben was pulled out. Anna gasped at the state of him. His handsome face was battered, bruised, and cut. There was a large gash in the back of his head, below where the helmet covered, bleeding freely. This blood soaked his T-Shirt. His helmet had a huge ding in it; there was no doubt that this helmet had saved his life. He was unconscious. She ran over to him and his rescuers, he was now on a stretcher.

"Ben!"

He was loaded on the last ambulance and taken to hospital. She was

allowed to ride in the back with him.

"Please be okay..."

A/N_*_*: Some people were wondering when I would be uploading next, never fear there will be a new chapter within the week. I just happen to have exams coming up in 2 weeks, my birthday in the weekend and school starting tomorrow so those will be delays. I will try my best to upload - there are chapters planned, it just takes me a lot of time to edit and type them up. :) Thanks for reading, reviewing and your patience *_*

53. Chapter 53

Chapter 53

It turned out that Ben would be okay...in an alive sense...

The oxygen brought him around in the ambulance, waking him up to see Anna's concerned face. He grimaced from the pain.

When arriving at the hospital Ben was rushed into the emergency room. Anna waited in the wings pacing, hoping and praying that he would be okay. While she waited, she got Cleo and Bella on the phone for a three-way call. She knew they would not be busy with work at the time. They both comforted her as she told them what had happened to Ben. They told her to keep them updated.

Anna was first in to see him. It turned out that Ben had three broken ribs, a fractured collarbone and his right leg was broken in two places. He had severe concussion so he would be in overnight for observation. His head was stitched up in the surgery room and so he had a large bandage around his head. It was a miracle that no water was involved as transforming in front of scalpel bearing doctors would not be a good idea. Anna took in his neck brace, bandages and plaster cast. A bandage encircled his head and chest, the cast reaching up his thigh.

She carefully manoeuvred around his injuries and kissed him.

"How are you feeling?" she asked softly,

"Not great," Ben croaked in response, wincing.

The next morning Anna called into Warren Preston's office and much to her surprise he said yes to the request that she could take a few more days off to look after her fiancÃ©.

When Ben was allowed home from the hospital, Anna temporarily moved in with him, in order to help him with everyday life with injuries. (Anna had not already moved in as it was against her morals to move in properly until she was married)

Everyone dropped in the next day. They had decided to have their regular meeting at Ben's house so he would not have to leave. Of course, Jennifer, Jacob, Leila and Charlie were brought along also.

Ben had been given full health insurance and ACC, as well as he job

being held for him until he recovered, after all, it was a work accident.

After chatting and having cups of coffee and biscuits, Emma got everyone's attention.

"So guys, Ash and I found out this morning that we are pregnant,"

Of course, the automatic response was 'Congratulations' and there was talk about the baby and when it was due. As per usual, after the announcement everyone went back to chatting.

OoOoO

"When should we have the wedding?" Ben asked Anna.

"Ahh, not sure,"

"I'd like to have it soon,"

"But you're in a wheelchair!"

"I don't mind, I just want to marry you ASAP,"

"Ben, that's sweet butâ€|I'd rather wait until you can walk againâ€|"

"Good pointâ€|well as soon as I get out of this damned thing, we are getting married that week,"

"Okay then," Anna laughed at his determined expression.

OoOoO

Some time laterâ€|

Charlie and Leila Bennett were now three months old and Rikki and Zane had found the same progressions that both Jacob and Jennifer had shown at the same age.

As Cleo put it, "It must be a mermaid thing,"

At six months Jennifer had already learnt to say "Mama" and "Dada" Cleo was very proud to say that she had said "Mama" first. Now at nearly a year old, it was safe to say that she had learnt quite a few words since.

Both Jacob and Jennifer swam with their mothers and their mother's friends, also learning their powers from when their mothers used theirs.

Rikki and Zane despite their previous concerns were proving to be very good parent. The first diaper Zane had to change was a big deal however and Rikki took to laughing at his efforts. She had had to change a diaper or two when she babysat a couple of times in her late teens.

OoOoO

Zane placed Leila gently into the bath gently, her tail appearing ten

seconds later. Suddenly the water around her began to bubble.

"Rikki?" he called wearily.

"Yeah?" Rikki popped her head around the bathroom door, Charlie in her arms.

"I think she may have your powers!"

Rikki took in the bubbles around her baby girl.

"Awesome! So, do ya think that Charlie will be the same?"

"More than likely, they don't have many differences! I think it's a miracle we can tell them apart. Not many can, not even their grandfathers."

After a while Leila grew tired of her game and eventually she let the bubbles subside and Zane continued to wash the little mermaid without burning himself. Next it was Charlie's turn. Nothing happened.

It was actually another event which alerted the young parents to Charlie's power.

They were out on a family picnic at the main beach when it looked like a storm was brewing.

"We'd better go," Rikki said eyeing the ominous clouds. Suddenly out of the blue a lightning bolt struck the ground about five metres from where they were sitting.

"I did not do that!" Rikki remarked and turned to look at Charlie and Leila. Charlie had her chubby fist raised.

"Charlie! Don't use your power in public," Rikki scolded gently. Secretly she was very pleased at the recent developments.

A/N: Please review!

54. Chapter 54

Chapter 54

"Zane? Where are the girls?" Rikki called out from the baby's room. "Where are the girls? Do you have them with you?"

"What do you mean? They were in their cribs asleep an hour ago," Zane called out. He came into the room, a frown on his face and they looked at each other. Rikki examined the cribs. In one there was a typed note.

'_If you want to see your children again, leave five thousand dollars for locker 205 at the bank. If this transaction does not occur within the week, well, use your imagination._'

"I bet I can guess who did this," Rikki said narrowing her eyes.

"Who?" Zane asked not catching on.

"My mother! Duh!" she replied

"Ohhh. But how do you know?"

Rikki rolled her eyes annoyed but worried.

"Who else has given us trouble with money? Who else knows how to get into the house, find the babies and take them without noise while we are in another room? Who else would the babies trust to make no noise with?"

"Right."

Cordeilia had waltzed into the office one day and played with the twins gaining their trust until Rikki and Zane had kicked her out.

"So what do we do?"

"Call the police of course," Rikki replied.

"Yes." Zane hurried to the phone and dialled 000, telling them what had happened. They came over and examined the note and cots. There were no fingerprints.

"Do you have any idea as to who may have taken your daughters?" One Officer asked.

"We have an idea." Rikki answered, "I believe it was probably my mother,"

"That's quite an accusation,"

"Yes, but she has given us trouble before,"

Ann officer jotted this down on his notepad, "What sort of trouble?" he asked.

"Begging for money then not leaving until we gave her the money â€“ stuff like that," Zane replied, "You know that we are a wealthy family,"

Meanwhile in an Unknown Location..._

"There you are, nice cots for the two of you," Cordeilia said. She placed the twins each in their own cot. Over the years, Cordeilia had grown a hard heart and she had records of a small mental disorder, this meant that causing her daughter heartbreak and loss by kidnapping her grandchildren would not affect her in any way â€“ not a flicker of conscience. Even so, she was not going to harm the children physically in any way â€“ she was not that evil. She had decided that she would merely give them away for adoption.

Cordeilia believed that the twins were about three months old. However, she was starting to doubt her sources. Physically the little girls looked their age but the looks behind their eyes were making her doubt this. They seemed to understand much more than they should at their age.

OoOoO

Back in the Bennett household, Rikki and Zane were majorly panicked. Rikki was keeping her cool slightly more than Zane however. Both Terry and Harrison had grown close to their Granddaughters and were pacing the living room. Terry muttering about 'how could Cordeilia possibly do this'

The police had researched Cordeilia and had found out that she had been involved in blackmail and shady dealings before. Currently they were trying to work out the whereabouts of Cordeilia, she had recently been moving all round the place.

"What is with this?" Zane began irritated.

"With what?" Rikki replied annoyed.

"My luck with family! First, you get kidnapped and almost die and now my children are kidnapped too! What have I done to deserve this!" he exclaimed on the verge of tears.

Rikki hadn't seen Zane in a state like this before. She attempted to comfort him -she had never been good at it but she would try.

She kissed him softly and rubbed his back. "Shh Zane, shh...I'm here, I didn't die, I'm sure Leila and Charlie will be fine too,"

Rikki continued to comfort him. Eventually he pulled himself together. Wiping a tear that had escaped away he hugged his slim wife and whispered "Thanks Rikki," She smiled in response.

_The Next day....

"Ew! You two are getting stinky! Time for a nappy change and bath!" Cordeilia exclaimed as she came into the hideout the next morning. She ran a large bath and placed her granddaughters into it gently. She had not forgotten how to nurse babies after Rikki.

Much to her surprise, in front of their grandmother the twins transformed into mermaids. They were completely oblivious to the danger they had put themselves in.

Cordeilia stared at them in shock.

"How can this be?"

55. Chapter 55

Chapter 55

Rikki and Zane had decided to not tell their friends about the kidnapping quite yet, they just said that they would be out of town for a few days. In reality, Zane and Rikki had decided to take matters into their own hands and search for Leila and Charlie themselves.

OoOoO

Cleo and Bella decided to give their children to their fathers to look after them for the day. They wanted to have a girl's day out, a swimming day with no cares of parenting. Lewis and Will accepted their responsibilities and decided to set up shot at Bella and Will's apartment.

Bella and Cleo called Emma and Anna, both of which were very happy to join them on their mermaid day. Ben and Ash joined the guys...and the babies.

The girls set off to their underwater paradise.

After swimming along the reefs and amongst the sea-life, the girls surfaced in the moon pool.

"I wish Rikki were here, then it would truly be 'girls day out' like times before kids," Cleo said

"That reminds me, it's her birthday in a couple of weeks?" Anna asked

"Yeah,"

"So another statue?" Cleo questioned

"Maybe we should give her something different this year..." Bella suggested. Emma nodded

OoOoO

Rikki and Zane drove to Cordeilia's classy apartment building. Rikki had asked her dad if he had any idea as to where his ex-wife lived, he suggested this one.

"Hers?"

"There's only one way to find out," Rikki replied.

Seeing as Rikki looked amazingly similar to her mother Zane suggested that Rikki pretend to be her mother, to get into her apartment. She found some clothes that she thought her mother would wear and put them on. She plastered herself in makeup this made her look much older but still stunningly beautiful. She undid her regular bun and let her hair loose, in the style her mother often wore.

"Do I really have to do this?" Rikki moaned

"Yes! Got any better ideas?"

She shrugged and shook her head defeated. "Come on Rikki, I'll be right there behind you,"

"Yeah, but you don't have to be like your mother!" she emphasised a shiver. "Besides, what if it's not the right apartment?"

"Ahh, well that would just be awkward." Rikki stared at him, "Okay okay, it won't be the wrong one! Come on, I'm sure you'll do fine."

He kissed her encouragingly. She looked at him as if saying 'help'

and then walked into the apartment building.

She waltzed up to the counter in very un-Rikki-like clothes.

"May I help you?" a young man at the counter asked.

"Yes. I'm Cordeilia Carlton and I seem to have misplaced my key," she gave him a flirtatious smile, "Do you think you could help me?"

Zane almost burst at laughing at how unlike Rikki this was. He covered it with a coughing fit. If looks could kill the one Rikki gave Zane when she turned around would have had him dead instantly. She turned back to the young man again replaced the scowl with a very flirtatious smile. She continued flirting with him. Zane was becoming increasingly jealous at his wife flirting with that young man, he knew it was just an act but he felt jealousy all the same, to make it worse Rikki had had to remove her wedding ring for the sake of the persona.

Much to Rikki's luck the young man fell into her hands and gave her the spare key to her mother's apartment.

"Thank you very much," she said blowing him a kiss before entering her mother's room.

Zane had followed from a distance and soon joined her.

"Thank God that is over! If I had to flirt with that guy any longer I think I may have puked!"

Zane laughed in response. "Let's get to work shall we?"

The couple went to work sifting through Cordeilia's apartment. Rikki started looking through her bedside table drawers.

"Hmm, what's this...?" She unfolded a piece of paper.

"_To do list._ Well my mother certainly isn't the smartest cookie in the jar..." Rikki said aloud to herself. Zane came over to read over her shoulder.

'**TO DO LIST'**

Beg Daughter for money [X]

Buy new handbag [X]

Figure out way to get more money to get out of bankruptcy [X]

Kidnap Granddaughters [X]

Take to secret hideout (map hidden elsewhere) [X]

Get money from box 205 []

Rikki showed it to Zane smirking. "She definitely is not smart"

"Shall we search for that map?"

"Duh!"

**A/N: _Thanks for the continuous reviews ;) I enjoy everyone of them :P
>**

So about the delay of updates - i had my 16th birthday yesterday :) so here are 2 chapters to make up for the lack of constant updates :)

Thanks for reading. Keep on reviewing :)

56. Chapter 56

Chapter 56

Another hour of searching upturned many unknowns about Cordeilia Carlton. Rikki had not known that her mother had been arrested for many petty crimes such as shoplifting and had served small sentences in prison. Zane had found the folder of all this in a locked cabinet. They had found a bunch of keys in a kitchen draw and had eventually found the one that fitted the lock. They did not know that the police had all this information the night before. Soon, after tearing through draws, papers and cupboards, Rikki found a folded sheet of paper. It was indeed the map to the location of their daughters. They made a copy of the map and then placed everything back the way they found it. Rikki breathed, putting herself back into her persona role and left the apartment. They took a back door out so that unwanted questions would not be asked. Rikki gladly changed out of her mother's attire and breathed a sigh of relief. Following the landmarks on the badly drawn map, the couple found the location quite quickly.

Back at the hideoutâ€|

Many thoughts were running through Cordeilia's head.

How was this possible? Where did this come from? Did this mean Rikki was one too? Zane even?

She was going to get to the bottom of it.

After it seemed like the mermaids were washed enough, she took the girls out of the bath. After this she placed them back in their cots, now in human form. Then she went to her laptop and typed '_Mermaids_' into the search engine. Nothing seemed to even relate remotely to her granddaughters' form. She decided to do some tests on her own.

How long could they hold their breath for? How long did it take them to transform?

She decided to test the latter first. She placed a splash of water on each girl's arm as they lay in their cots. Were her eyes deceiving her? Nothing had happened. She could of sworn they changed as soon as they touched the water. Just as she was about to give up, they transformed.

"Ha! I knew it!" she exclaimed triumphantly! She went to grab her

camera as the twins went back into their human form.

The door swung open and Rikki and Zane rushed inside. Rikki rushed over to the cots to see if her babies were okay. Cordeilia returned from the other room stopping in her tracks as she saw her uninvited guests.

"How did you find me?"

"Your 'To-do List' helped," Rikki replied sarcastically.

"Damn it! I knew I should have disposed of that darned list!" she paused suddenly, thinking. "Rikki darling, your children here, wellâ€|they seem to be veryâ€|special," she hinted.

"I don't know what you meanâ€|" Rikki replied acting oblivious.

"Yes you do! Surely you aren't such bad parents to never give your children a bath,"

Rikki dropped the oblivious stance.

"Are you one yourself?" Cordeilia asked excitedly.

"No." Rikki replied firmly.

"You sure 'bout that?"

"She said no! What's it with you?" Zane interrupted.

Cordeilia grabbed a bottle of water out of nowhere and squirted it on her. Rikki gasped and looked to Zane before toppling over. Zane caught her expertly, and she smiled her thanks.

"I knew it! Like mother like daughter ay?"

"I am nothing like you!" Rikki growled.

Cordeilia rolled her eyes in a fashion Zane knew too well, "You know what I mean honey,"

"Don't you dare touch my family," his eyes blazed.

"Hmm, we'll see. You realise sweetheart that this is my family too,"

Rikki began drying herself off. Cordeilia took a snapshot of this, right before she changed into her human self.

"Give that here!"

"What are you going to do to stop me honey? I wonder how much money I could get selling three mermaids on the black marketâ€|"

"You vulgar, malevolent, repulsive, malicious old hag! That's your own flesh and blood!"

Rikki had not even known that such words were in Zane's vocabulary. She almost laughed at the thought but stopped herself remembering the precariousness of the situation. She picked herself off the floor and

went over to the cots unnoticed to get her girls.

"Hmm, maybe a bribe would stop me from spreading the word..." she hinted oh so subtly.

"How much?" Zane asked. Rikki edged closer to the door, carrying her sleeping babies. She forced herself not to shout out "No Zane!" She kept her mouth firmly shut and left the room leaving Zane and Cordeilia bartering over money. As soon as she was outside where she could not be heard, she pulled her cell phone out and dialled 000. She knew that even if Cordeilia did tell people, they were not going to believe a deranged kidnapper's story. Rikki could not believe that Zane had fallen into her mother's snare twice with the money. He must really, really care about her and their kids.

"...and please hurry!" Rikki said urgently into the phone before heading back inside. It seemed that they had not missed her absence. She had left Leila and Charlie outside the door, telling them to stay. They heard the tell-tale wail of police car sirens as they made their way towards the now-not-so-secret hideout. Cordeilia heard them and got up suddenly moving swiftly towards the back door. Zane however was faster. He pinned his mother-in-law to the ground.

The police handcuffed her and ignored her cries about a mermaid plot to destroy humanity, and that her daughter and granddaughters were part of it as Rikki predicted. Their secret was safe.

**A/N: **_*_I hope you enjoyed it please review *_

57. Chapter 57

Chapter 57

After Cordeilia was taken into custody and a date was set for her trial, the police came to Rikki and Zane's house to ask them a few questions. Rikki had lovingly tucked her babies in their cribs when they had arrived home. Zane had watched smiling to himself " he had never seen Rikki so affectionate. Anyway, they sat them down and the senior officer got out his notepad.

"How did you come to find Cordeilia and your children?" he asked

"Ah, we found this 'To-do-list' in her apartment." Rikki replied

"What were you doing in her apartment?"

"We...ah...decided to go have a look there for anything that would lead us to our kids..."

"I see. Did you not think that such information could have been given to the police so we could investigate it safely, to make our mission easier?"

"Um..." Rikki looked to Zane for help.

"You see officer, we did not know whether it was her apartment at the time, we decided to check it out..."

"How did you get into it?"

"It was unlocked?"

The officer frowned sceptically but did not go into this further.
"Consider this a warning. Please try stay out of police business in the future. Or if you are meddling, call us before you meddle too deeply."

"Yes sir. We will try."

OoOoO

Meanwhile the mermaids had been swimming and relaxing for hours on end, having a marvellous time. As half of the girls had babies to look after, they had not seen each other and swum as much as they used to. They promised that when their kids were a little older and could care themselves a little better, then they would hang out a lot more.

As Lewis had predicted the mermaids' bodies had returned to their regular size shortly after the birth. He had noticed that even though they were much older, they did not look a day over 20.

The next day Rikki and Zane invited their friends over for a BBQ for Zane's Birthday. The friends had been completely oblivious to the drama within in Bennett family. At the BBQ, they spilt the news about what had happened. Of course, there was plenty of gasping and asking whether they were all okay, Zane's response to this was "Of course! We are all here in front of you!"

Rikki of course had to give an in depth explanation of what had happened â€“ however, Rikki's explanation was not too 'in depth.'

OoOoO

After eating steaks and sausages eventually, everyone had gone home. The couple moved into the lounge.

Zane pulled Rikki onto the couch causing her to squeal as she fell onto him. He began to tickle her. This started an unusual fit of giggling and squealing to come from the squirming Rikki.

"St...Stop it!" she gasped

"One condition."

"Anything!" she managed. He claimed her lips in a passionate kiss. As Zane pulled away, he whispered softly, "I love you,"

"Likewise," she replied breathless. He pulled her in for another kiss.

'Waah!' was heard from the baby's room.

"They have perfect timing," Rikki said rolling her eyes. Rikki got up reluctantly and retrieved the twins from the bedroom. She handed Leila to Zane. After breastfeeding them and putting them to bed for

the second time, Rikki decided to retire for the night, of course Zane decided this too.

Zane put his arm around Rikki's middle as they lay in bed. She rolled over to face him.

"Do you think life will go back to normal now? With mum in jail I mean,"

"Yeah. She can't bother us anymore, we'll be fine." He kissed her gently, "The things that have happened to us...well there is definitely a very slim chance of them happening again. Don't worry,"

She smiled at him in the dark. "'Night Zane,"

"Sleep well Rikki," she turned back over and he pulled her close. They soon fell asleep.

**A/N: **_
Sorry it's so short. This was one for the Zikki lovers :P
Please Review**_

58. Chapter 58

Chapter 58

Rikki woke the next morning, sun streaming through the curtains. She could feel Zane's tight grip around her middle. She wanted a shower before they left for the cafe in a couple of hour's time. Correction, a bath, the whole mermaid thing restricted her from showers as she did when she was a teenager. Anyway, Zane had been tired lately and she didn't want to wake him up just yet. She tried to lift his arm off herself gently, when she thought she had succeeded and went to move out of the bed, both Zane's arms came back around her, seeming tighter than before. She sighed, rolling her eyes. Someone was a little overprotective. She manoeuvred herself out of his grip again and quickly placed her pillow into his arms. He seemed to relax as he hugged the soft pillow. She chuckled to herself and made her way to the bathroom. She ran a bath and the warm water soaked her tail.

Zane came into the bathroom some time later.

"So this is where you got to," he said rubbing his sleep-filled eyes.

"I left you sleeping â€“ besides you seemed pretty comfy cuddling my pillow," she laughed

Zane blushed â€“ a rare sight to see.

"I'll meet you downstairs,"

Rikki pulled the plug and evaporated the water on her skin; this made her dry nearly instantly. She picked herself out of the bath and went downstairs to meet Zane. He had already brought Leila and Charlie down to the kitchen and was making himself some toast. Zane gave her a kiss as she came into the kitchen. She soon got down to breastfeed her offspring.

Soon enough the little family were walking to work. Charlie and Leila were in the double mountain buggy that Zane was pushing.

OoOoO

"Good morning Ash,"

"Morning Em, sleep well?"

She nodded. He pulled her in for a kiss.

"You?"

He smiled and nodded.

Ash dropped Emma off at work before driving himself to the stables.

She unlocked the classroom and set out her lessons for the day. At half past eight, the first kids started dribbling into school. They dropped their bags on the hooks outside the classroom door and then they went on the playground or into the class. Emma taught a class of twenty year threes. She taught them spelling and adding and took them out for a couple of games of duck duck goose and cat and mouse throughout the day. She had to discipline a boy for hitting another at mat time. Overall, she had quite a good day. During her lunch break, she went into the staff room.

"Hey Emma," Two other young teachers came over to where Emma was sitting.

"Oh hey guys,"

"How are you, class behaving?" One said.

"Yeah yeah, what about yours Kate?"

"I had to tell Ethan off for pulling the hair of the girl that sits in front of him."

"What about you Phoebe?"

"I actually had quite a good day, how's the baby doing?"

"He or She is going well, Lewis gave me an ultrasound and they are progressing fine. You do know Lewis ay?"

"Yeah, I think I met him once," Phoebe replied. Kate nodded.

"We should go get coffee sometime,"

"Yeah, that'd be good,"

Emma, Kate and Phoebe had all become friends as they started the school about the same time.

The trio ate their lunch and chatted until their break was over.

**A/N: **_* In case you ask at school, Kate and Phoebe, they were named after you :P Thanks for being so supportive of my story and reading it for me and giving me ideas and corrections :P See ya on Monday :D*_

**OoOoO**

_Five__ months later..._

Cleo woke up remembering what day it was. She smiled. Today, one year ago she had given birth to a beautiful mermaid. It had surely been one year of surprises and joy of raising Jennifer Raine. In that time she had learnt to swim perfectly, learnt to crawl and the take a few stumbling steps walking. She was almost stringing full sentences together. She could use her power flawlessly. Some cheeky behaviour had to be overrun by her experienced mother. Lewis and Cleo had laughed at their daughter's use of water.

All the friends would be coming over to celebrate their baby's first birthday. Time to get to work.

Cleo rolled out of bed. She rubbed the sleep from her eyes and went downstairs to the kitchen.

OoOoO FYI: Jake= 11 months, Leila and Charlie= 8 months

"Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday dear Jenny, happy birthday to you" Cleo and Lewis sung. Jennifer sat up in her cot wondering what was going on. Cleo bet she knew. She gurgled her happiness understanding the moon.

"Ma-ma, wat that?" she asked brokenly pointing to the cake she was carrying.

"It is a cake. Today was when you were born last year. You have to blow out the candles honey,"

"Ok-ay,"

She tried to blow them out. Lewis secretly helped her. Jennifer did not notice and sat back down in the cot satisfied. Cleo smiled and handed the cake to Lewis. She lifted her baby girl out of the cot and carried her downstairs on her hip.

"Do you want some honey?"

Jenny nodded enthusiastically. Lewis cut a bit off and gave it to the excited one year old. She beamed after consuming the chocolaty goodness.

"More?" she looked at her daddy hopefully. He could not withstand those chocolate brown eyes and gave her another slice. Cleo rolled her eyes but smiled anyway. She had heard that Jen would've mashed it round but it seemed their baby girl was very civilised.

OoOoO

All the friends and her best bud Jake would be coming around for a birthday tea. Cleo decided to bathe herself and Jennifer before their

guests arrived. She turned the tap on with a flick of the wrist. Both girls transformed in the bathtub. Cleo gasped as she noticed the scales on her daughter's tail. It had grown a shade darker overnight. It was a shade somewhere between the original cream and Cleo's orange tail. Cleo smiled. This showed her that her baby was getting older.

Cleo carried Jennifer down the stairs and then placed her down so she could walk by herself. The little girl held her hand. Lewis had blown up a couple of balloons and stuck them around the room. He got down to Jennifer's height and kissed the girl's head. "Happy Birthday sweetie," she seemed to giggle at this.

"When's everyone arriving?"

"In a couple of hours,"

"Right then."

OoOoO

Cleo had onto cooking the food with Lewis' help. They served this to their friends, whereas the kids had baby food. There was laughter and chatting. The friends never seemed to get tired of each other. Once the kids had eaten, their parents let them to play together with Jennifer's toys while the adults did their things.

A/N: _**Hope you enjoyed it, please leave me a review :P**_

59. Chapter 59

Chapter 59

Three and a half months later...

_18_th_ of May_

Emma lay in her bed with her newborn son in her arms. Ash looked down at his family proudly. Little Dove. Eric Hayden Dove. It had been good timing when Eric had decided to come into the world. Emma had just been visiting Cleo that yesterday morning. Just as she was about to leave her waters broke. Lewis was right there so there was not much stress. Ash however had to leave the stables in the hands of his staff and drive all the way back into town. Fortunately, for Ash he had plenty of time to get there. Therefore, the tearing his hear out stuck in traffic and behind red lights was worth nothing. Her labour had lasted a few hours so he was there in plenty of time. Lewis had identified the gender for them a month earlier and so they had picked their son's name beforehand. Always like Emma to be prepared.

OoOoO

CHARACTER PROFILE UPDATE!

**Okay, I know that some people are getting confused with birthdays, jobs and dates so I will do a completely revamped Character Profile:**

Month= May

Rikki Bennett (nee' Chadwick): Birthday: 1st October. Age: 25. Occupation: Treasure Hunter (has a license) and Co-Owner of Rikki's Cafe. Mermaid for: 9+ years. Powers: Heat water, fire and lightning. Married to: Zane Bennett for a year.

Zane Bennett: Birthday: 30th November. Age: 26. Occupation: Co-Owner of Rikki's Cafe. Married to: Rikki Bennett for a year.

Leila and Charlie Bennett: Birthday: 4th June. Age: 11months. Mermaid: Since birth. Powers: Heat water, fire and lightning.

Cleo McCartney **(nee' Sertori): **Birthday: 12th July. Age: 25. Occupation: Marine Park Dolphin Trainer. Mermaid: for 9+ years. Powers: Mould water, control wind. Married to: Lewis McCartney for over two years.

**Lewis McCartney: **Birthday: 5th February. Age: 27. Occupation: Marine Biologist at local institute. Married to: Cleo McCartney for over two years.

Jennifer McCartney: Birthday 19th February. Age: 1 year 3 months. Mermaid: Since birth. Powers: Mould water, control wind.

Isabella Benjamin **(nee' Hartley): **Birthday: 6th December. Age: 25. Occupation: Music Teacher. Mermaid for: 15+ years. Powers: changing water into gelatine and a solid substance. Married to Will Benjamin for over two years.

William Benjamin: Birthday: 9th May. Age: 26. Occupation: Marine Park Dolphin Trainer. Married to Bella Benjamin for over two years.

Jacob Benjamin: Birthday: 31st March. Age: 1 year 2 months. Merman: Since birth. Powers: changing water into gelatine and a solid substance. Also changing water into an elastic solid substance.

**Emma Dove **(nee' Gilbert): Birthday: 15th March. Age: 26. Occupation: Primary School Teacher. Mermaid: for 9+ years. Powers: Ice, Snow. Married to Ash Dove for almost a year.

Ash Dove: Birthday: 2nd January. Age 28. Occupation: Horse trainer, horse-riding instructor. Jockey. Married to Emma Dove for almost a year.

Eric Dove: Birthday: 17th May. Age: Newborn. Merman: Since birth. Powers: yet unknown but suspected to be ice and snow like his mother.

Anna Matthews: Birthday: 7th April. Age: 26. Mermaid for: 2 years. Powers: Mould and heating water. Occupation: Architect. In a relationship with Ben Charles for 4+ years. (FiancÃ©)

**Robert Charles: **Birthday: 14th August. Age 26. Merman for: 2 years. Powers: Mould and freezing water. In a relationship with Anna Matthews for 4+ years. (FiancÃ©)

Zane and Rikki's Wedding Anniversary = 30th May

Emma and Ash's Wedding Anniversary = 21st August

Cleo and Lewis' Wedding Anniversary = 18th June

Bella and Will's Wedding Anniversary = 1st August

OoOoO

Rikki played with her daughters in their makeshift playpen in the manager's office. Zane opened the door.

"Rikki?" she turned around. "Could you spare a moment? I need some help out here, Rhonda went home early â€“ she's sick."

"Yeah sure." Rikki got up and left her babies playing and closed the office door behind her.

OoOoO

"WHAT THE-!" Rikki yelled as she opened the door, half an hour later. There were puddles all over the floor and steam rose up from them. There was plastic strewn on the ground and shattered glass beside the manager's desk. Charlie and Leila just looked up at her innocently with large blue-grey eyes. Zane came up behind her. "Look at this mess!"

"Wow." He said simply, his eyebrows raised.

"You two are in big trouble," Rikki said threateningly. "Though you are not even one year olds, I know you can understand me." She told the little girls. She evaporated the water on the floor completely so she could safely enter the room. Zane picked up the plastic off the floor. The twins had obviously used their power on the water canisters. They could only stand so much heated pressure and they had blown them up. Zane swept up the glass, happy to leave the telling off to Rikki. She looked at him though so he knew he had to say something.

"Never use your powers again like that!" he reprimanded. Rikki nodded and turned back to the girls.

"Understand?"

They nodded solemnly â€“ this surprised Rikki. "Don't use your powers unless you absolutely need them okay? They can be very dangerous,"

**A/N: **_*Sorry the actual story is so short but this chapter is mostly a character profile update. PLEASE REVIEW! THANKS SO MUCH FOR READING!*_*

60. Chapter 60

Chapter 60

Three Months laterâ€“|

Jennifer is now 1 Â½

Jacob now 1 and 5 months

Leila and Charlie now 1 year

Eric now 3 months

All the mothers' bodies had gone back to their original shape a week after the births of their children FYI.

OoOoO

It was Cleo's birthday again. Lewis had given her breakfast in bed that morning â€“ unfortunately, it had not gone according to plan. The glass of water on the tray had spilt over Cleo but she had laughed it off when she had transformed. She was still very appreciative of what Lewis was trying to do. She kissed him, making him feel much better.

After she was dry and had eaten, she made her way down the stairs to see a very excited toddler holding a present double the size of herself. (Jennifer could walk quite well at this point and could speak with broken sentences. It was amazing how much she could understand)

"Aw, is that for me?" she asked her daughter. Jennifer nodded solemnly.

"Okay then," The large present passed into Cleo's arms and she sat down on the couch, Jennifer coming to sit beside her. She tore off the paper to look at a now uncovered box.

"Aww, thank you sweetie," she smiled at Jennifer and kissed her forehead. She mouthed 'Thank you' to Lewis over her daughter's head. He smiled in response. Cleo had been given a waffle iron. Lewis had known that his wife had had her eye on one for quite some time and when explained to Jennifer, she was more than happy to choose that as her mother's present.

"Want some waffles?" Cleo asked

"Yeah!" Lewis said. Jennifer nodded enthusiastically. Cleo laughed amused and she soon got to work with her new Waffle Iron.

OoOoO

Bella and Will were walking through the forest they knew well on Mako Island.

"Remember when we first walked through here together? All those years ago?" Will asked

She nodded and laughed in response, "I fell into that river and you had no idea where I was,"

"Yeahâ€œit all makes sense now though, looking back on it. To make things more confusing Rikki had to turn up and then the others in the

Moon Pool,"

"Rikki was a life saver -she dried me and the pack before you came and saw me,"

"You could've trusted me you know,"

"Yeah, but we had only just met,"

"True."â€|"

They both laughed and continued their reminiscing walk through the forest.

OoOoO

Emma and Ash were trekking across the hillsides with a small group of teenagers. It was Emma's day off so she was helping him out, plus she just enjoyed the company and riding. Over her years with Ash, he had taught her to ride properly and she soon enjoyed it thoroughly. Rikki and Zane were looking after Eric for the day. At first Emma had been a little worried about leaving her son in Rikki's care but decided to trust her judgements, after all Rikki had kids of her own and they seemed fine.

Once the teenaged group had finished their ride, Emma and Ash decided to go for a ride on their own to have a picnic they had packed and get some alone time. Ash was riding Ajax, an athletic bay stallion, while Emma was riding Missy, a brown appaloosa mare.

They rode over the countryside and reached a nice spot under a couple of oak trees. Ash, being a gentleman, helped Emma down from Missy even though she was completely capable. She smiled at him. Ash and Emma set out the mat, and the packed lunch of sandwiches and fruit. Perfect for Emma â€“ she loved healthy food. It turned to be a romantic picnic with them laughing and rolling around in the long grass. The horses watched them, chomping away.

**A/N: **_*For those Emma/Ash lovers (hint hint Kate) I hope you enjoyed this.*_*

"We'd better get back," Ash said as he looked at his watch. It was well into the afternoon. Emma nodded. They mounted up with their packed up lunch and they galloped back to the stables. There they brushed, fed and watered their horses and then Ash gave the responsibilities to his man in charge. They went home to get ready for the night. After all, it was Cleo's annual birthday dinner very soon.

OoOoO

"Time to go!" Bella called to Will and she gathered the brightly wrapped gift and held Jacob's hand as they walked to the car. Will came quickly out the door, turning out the lights and locking it behind him as Bella strapped Jacob into the booster seat. The family soon was ready to drive to the McCartney's house.

**A/N: **_*Thanks again for reading, please please please review :D*_*

61. Chapter 61

Chapter 61

"Come in guys!" Cleo welcomed everyone in. Of course, Rikki and Zane arrived 'fashionably late' as Rikki put it, in reality they were nearly an hour late. Even Anna and Ben had arrived twenty minutes earlier. They had come straight from the doctors, Ben had upgraded from his full leg cast to a half leg, meaning he was not in his wheelchair anymore, now on crutches. Because of this upgrade, Anna and Ben had set their wedding date. They would be married mid-august.

The friends and family of Cleo and Lewis sat around their enlarged dinner table chatting and cooing at the young additions to the mer-circle.

After they had finished eating, Lewis got everyone's attention by banging on a glass. "Cleo would like to speak," she whispered a thanks to him.

"Thanks for coming everyone. I thought we'd do something a little different this year,"

There was murmuring. "Well, Lewis convinced me, I thought it'd just be a little fun..."

"Just spit it out!" Rikki said impatiently.

"Okay, well we got Singstar!"

Everyone looked shocked, especially Rikki as they all knew Cleo wasn't the best singer and she was often reluctant. Rikki smiled. "Bags first!"

Rikki and Cleo took up the microphones.

Emma face palmed. "Oh dear, kill me now..."

"Surely she can't be that bad," Ash said.

"You have no idea..."

OoOoO

Ten minutes later of Rikki and Cleo's loud, out of tune singing everyone was face palming, except for Lewis. He strangely enjoyed it.

"Hey Rikki, do you think someone else could have a turn?" Bella said wincing as Rikki missed a note completely. Rikki did not hear. Cleo did however and tapped Rikki on the shoulder.

"Rikki, times up!" Will said on behalf of Bella.

She turned around. "Okay then." Rikki handed the mike to Bella and sat next to Zane. Bella pulled Will up to duet with her. They were actually quite good at singing together.

"Hey you two should duet at the cafe sometime," Rikki exclaimed after their songs.

"No. No way. I don't sing." Will replied.

"After a puppy-dog put from Bella and pressuring from his friends he finally agreed to sing â€“at some point- a duet with Bella.

For the rest of the night they split into boys vs. Girls teams and battled it out on the Singstar. Team Blue (the girls) won. Anna and Bella did most of the work. Rikki and Cleo just had fun singing along.

Lewis had much enjoyed the singing affair.

OoOoO

10th August...

It was the day of Anna and Ben's wedding. Anna had asked the girls to be bridesmaids and Jennifer was more than happy to be the flower girl. Emma had to decline because of Eric but Anna understood completely. Anna asked Jacob solemnly if he wanted to be the ring boy. Once it was explained to him, he nodded enthusiastically. Ben asked one of his friends from Brisbane to be his best man; he hoped the guys would not be offended. He did not need to worry, they were perfectly happy. Although winter, Anna hoped to be married outside. Miraculously it was a beautiful hot sunny day, quite amazing; it was as if her prayers had been answered. It was in the style of Sam's and Don's wedding all those years before.

Anna looked beautiful in her white wedding gown walking down between the rows of chairs. Her father was holding her arm trying not to cry. Ben, although in a moon boot and on crutches, stood proudly at the end of the isle. He joined one hand with Anna's, the other giving him support.

The celebrant began the ceremony. All of a sudden, showers of water came from nowhere. It was the Sam and Don drama all over again. The mermaids were quick to act. Cleo and Anna raised their hands and protected all the mermaids, Rikki quickly drying the water that had landed on them. The guys quickly got to work at what was causing the interruption. Ben was upset. Anna told him not to worry and kissed him. It turned out the gardener had forgotten to turn off the sprinklers and he was very apologetic. Soon there was no more water coming out of the sky and the girls, and Ben relaxed. Rikki dried the grass so that they wouldn't have to worry. Soon the lovely ceremony continued without following interruptions. Anna was not upset in the slightest making Ben not so either. It turned to a success regardless.

OoOoO

Anna and Ben Charles would now continue onto their honeymoon. They actually decided to camp over on Mako for a few days, in order to just swim the week away. It was perfect for the mermaid and merman. Anna would be moving in with Ben again soon after and selling her house.

**A/N: **_*Thank you to those faithful few who review my every

chapter! LOVE YOU! Please continue reviewing. I hope you enjoyed the chapters! Tell me what you think, give me ideas, I may incorporate them...**_

**And over 60 chapters! Wow, quite a milestone. I had no idea my story would get this long...I am also planning to continue 'A fishy tale' into a sequel :D**

62. Chapter 62

Chapter 62

A few months later...

"Hey Lewis," Cleo began, "Wouldn't it be cool if we could live on Mako, away from all the worries of raising our kids in front of humans. We could live there until they learn full control of their powers and their situation â€“ stopping them being exposed in public. What do you think? Do you know if someone already owns the land?"

"It sounds idealistic â€“ convenient too...I don't think anyone owns the land privately, the council is in charge of the land." Lewis replied, "I'll find out more for you tomorrow, during my lunch break."

"Awesome. Ohh! Brainwave! We could get Anna to design it and Ben to be in charge of the building...Ooh! What if all of us could live over there?" Cleo was getting very excited. Lewis chuckled.

During his lunch break the next day, as promised Lewis went to the city council to ask about Mako Island.

OoOoO

"No one owns the land currently â€“ it is looked after by the government. We could give you private ownership of the island in exchange for a very large sum of money and if you promised that most of the land will still be kept as a wildlife reserve and part of the island is let for a campsite."

Lewis nodded.

"You are the first person who has had any interest in buying the island in quite some time. The last person was Harrison Bennett, but he pulled out his offer rather abruptly when his son was still in school..."

"What sort of money are we talking sir?"

"Hmm..." the man thought to himself, "I think we were looking for a sum over \$4 million...about \$4.5 million for the island."

Lewis couldn't wait to tell the news to Cleo, if they all worked together they may possibly be able to get that unrealistic sum for Mako Island. As he drove home he thought to himself. Rikki and Zane could help out quite substantially, and Anna and Ben were also reasonably wealthy. They could possibly get the island.

OoOoO

Everyone was quite excited and decided to put their extra money into an 'Island Fund' They would most definitely all pitch in. It would give their kids a safe upbringing until they could understand, it also meant that they could swim more often, to work sometimes also. Zane's boat could be the guys' ferry. The friends proposed ideas to each other. The first idea was to get Anna to design and Ben to build their living quarters. Emma then suggested it would be quite expensive to buy all the resources, so why not make the buildings out of water. They were quite confused at first but then Emma explained herself.

"Bella, you can harden the water so that it is waterproof, can't you?"

"Yes, I think it would be waterproof and solid,"

"Well there we go, we could make the houses out of that hardened jelly stuff..."

"Crystallised water..." Lewis corrected.

"Crystallised water then," Emma continued, "Cleo, Anna and Ben could move the water into shape and stuff!"

"That is possible," Lewis thought it over.

"What do we do?" Rikki demanded, referring to herself and Emma, "Are we the portable air conditioning system?" she asked sarcastically.

Everyone's eyes lit up.

"Wait! That was a joke!"

"It would be perfect Rikki," Will said.

"Ha-ha." she laughed sarcastically, but seeing they were deadly serious, she agreed wearily. "Okay then..."

**A/N: **_*Thanks Kate and Smile for the ideas.*_*

Rikki decided to go treasure hunting to see if she could find anything of value to help with the money. She recruited her fellow mermaids and showed them her favourite treasure spots. The tide always seemed to drag things in there. After work for quite a few weeks, they would take turns searching the sea beds for valuable items. They split into groups in case of dangers: Anna, Ben and Emma in one, and Bella, Rikki and Cleo in the other. Will and Ash would be the boat with Anna's group and Zane and Lewis would be with the other girls. Emma decided to do the babysitting most days however.

Rikki's group came across one of the wrecks quite far out at sea above a reef. They split up swimming through the different openings throughout the ship. Rikki came across a large chest. She slammed her tail against it to open it. Her eyes widened as she looked inside. There were multicoloured jewels, pearls and jewellery. How on earth had no one found this sooner? She gathered Bella and Cleo and showed

them. They three of them carried the heavy chest to the boat.

"Look at this!" Bella yelled to them excitedly. Zane whistled as he saw the contents.

"As much as this will be worth a lot of money...realistically we need to find a lot more treasure..."

Rikki frowned in agreement. "We'll keep searching and find as much as we can within a few weeks and then, with my licence, hopefully get money in exchange."

A/N: **_Sorry guys, I won't be updating much for the next week, I have really, really important exams. I think this may possibly be the last update for about a week. But you never know, I might be irresponsible and upload another. Who knows? Anyway, thanks for reading and please review :D**_

63. Chapter 63

Chapter 63

For the next two weeks, the mermaids and merman searched the seabeds around the coasts of Australia. After this, they looked at their vast collections from the deepest parts of the ocean. There were personal items such as jewellery, paintings in a large locked chest, a small box of damaged letters, gunpowder, that large box of jewels and a small statue. The mermaids decided to resort also to searching the Tasman Sea, upturning a couple of rotting tiki (Polynesian statues carved out of wood), more gunpowder and a handful of old coins. Overall, it did not look like there was a lot of money that would be gained.

Rikki decided to go for one last look, dragged Zane and Will along in their boat just in case.

She was searching one particularly deep and dark part of the ocean, approaching a rotting, groaning shipwreck. Judging by its size, the past owners looked to be quite wealthy, she may have a chance. Being the daredevil she was, she ignored the sharks, and the fact that the wreck looked like it would collapse any moment and swam towards it. She swam through a large hole in the side of the ship, obviously the cause of the disaster. She switched on the large divers torch that Will had leant her. She almost had a heart attack. There in front of her was a skeleton, who knew how long it had been there for. She recollected herself and continued through the hull. Fish swam throughout. She stopped and shone the torch around what looked like the captain's cabin. A sparkle caught her eye. She moved the torch back onto that spot - something sparkled again. It looked to be some sort of chest under a mass of wood and metal debris. She manoeuvred herself between a couple of serrated bars. As she moved a large grill her hand caught the jagged edge slicing the back of her hand. She cursed into the water, bubbles replacing her words. As she did this she jerked back banging her tail into one of the bars. She cursed again, she had also slit her tail. Blood flowed freely. She had to get out of there now, the sharks would smell her soon. She had been right about the glint however, there was a slightly opened chest filled with coins.

She winced in pain as she used her injured tail getting out of the dangerous corner. She covered her cut hand with her other hand applying pressure to try stop the blood loss from there, placing the torch under her arm.

She swam towards her exit. A large shark beat her to it. Again, she cursed swimming away from it. It sensed her fear and smelt the trail of blood chasing the injured mermaid. She swam out of the ship as fast as she could. She started feeling sick from blood loss. 'Why am I running?' she asked herself. She turned to face the shark lifting her uninjured hand out and boiling the water around her. The confused shark swam away. She continued the motion as she surfaced to keep herself safe from any other blood-hungry sharks. Her blood was still flowing freely out of her tail.

Will and Zane wondered what was taking Rikki so long. They looked over to where she had swum to and saw bubbles followed by Rikki surfacing. They were confused as to what was happening. She swam over to their boat.

"Help me on board!" she said weakly. They looked at her quizzically but soon saw the pale face and trail of blood in the water.

"Oh my gosh Rikki!" Zane panicked, "What happened!"

"No time. For that. Now. Need on board now." She gasped out. "Losing. Blood."

"Right!" The two unobservant boys helped her onboard. They took in her hand and tail. Her tail had a couple of scales missing and a large gash.

"Can you dry yourself Rikki?"

"Yeah. Sure." She winced raising her other hand. "Just a sec,"

Zane put pressure on her right leg, blood seeping through his fingers while Rikki put pressure on her hand and Will drove back to shore carefully. Now that she was out of the water, the blood-flow was lessening, a scab forming over her hand. She was still pale and looked close to fainting. They called Lewis and he quickly wrapped her leg and hand tightly in bandaged and piled her in the car along with Zane. Will said that he would meet them there â€“ he had to deal with the boat. Lewis drove them straight to A.N.E. Zane carried her in. "Ah. Hi, my wife here has had a bad injury scuba diving and has lost a lot of blood," he said to the receptionist.

"She is in a real bad way," Lewis added in. Rikki looked on the verge of passing out. "We came straight from the ocean otherwise we would've called an ambulance."

Rikki was soon taken into the operation theatre. Her leg wound was quite deep and would require stitches. After the stitches she was wheeled into a hospital room with a drip of Saline solution. She had had Class II Haemorrhage (losing between 15% - 30% of blood) and the drip would resuscitate her blood volume. She had a bandage on her leg and left hand.

Rikki would not be doing much swimming in the next week. Therefore she called Ben and the other mermaids telling them the location of

the chest and what to avoid such as sharks and the serrated metal.

"We'll be fine" was their response.

A/N: I_*_ know how I said that there wouldn't be another update for the next week but...welcome to the world of the very naughty Krystalslazz (who should be studying...) anyway, don't expect another one this week...but you never know...**_

64. Chapter 64

Chapter 64

Rikki recovered quite well and was soon out of the hospital.

Two weeks laterâ€|

The phone rang in Bella and Will's apartment.

"Hello? Bella speaking,"

"Hey darling,"

"Hey Mum, how are you doing?"

"Not too good."

"Oh?"

"I have some bad newsâ€|Great aunt Siobhan (Sha-vaun) passed away last night,"

"Oh no!" Bella interjected. She had not seen Siobhan in a few years but she felt sadness rush over her.

"Yeah. Anyway, her funeral is in about a week's time, to allow her extended family time to travel over to Ireland. Also we have to be there for the hearing of her will; after all we are her only living relatives."

"I will be there don't worry. I'll meet you there."

"Okay." *sniff*

"You okay Mum? I can come over if you want some company,"

"No, it's okay, your father will be home soon,"

"Okay, if you're sure,"

"Yes. Positive, don't worry 'bout me. Have a good night Bella,"

"You too Mum."

OoOoO

Bella had told her mum that she would catch up with her old friends from when she lived in Ireland and do a bit of sightseeing before the

scheduled funeral and Will hearing. In fact she was going to swim over, thus meaning having to leave right away. Will was going to fly over and meet her there, leaving a few days later than her.

She packed her credit card, phone, food and a small bottle of water into a waterproof bag.

Will handed it to her.

"Thanks Will,"

"Be safe," he replied

"I will." They kissed.

"I love you,"

"Love you too. I'll see you there,"

He nodded and smiled. They shared one last kiss and then she swam full speed on her way to Ireland.

OoOoO

By the time she reached the shores of her destination, she was very exhausted. She had made a stop each night on a rocky outcrop or beach for a meal, drink and rest. She had done this trip many times over the years; however, this time was a much more depressing reason " to hear the Will of her Great Aunt Siobhan. She was a very wealthy woman. Bella didn't know the exact quantity of her aunt's wealth but she knew it was well into the multi-millions.

Bella dried herself off on a private beach cursing to herself for not bringing a towel. After devouring the last of her food, she made her way to Dublin.

OoOoO

Bella caught the bus and looked at the diver's watch that Will gave her. She always put it on after her transformation so that it wouldn't disappear along with the rest of her clothes. She was right on time. Her husband should be arriving in Ireland soon after having the hard job of leaving a protesting Jacob with the McCartneys. The funeral was in two days. That would give her plenty of time to visit her friends like she said she was. She hadn't told her mother that she'd be swimming over; even though her parents knew about her being a mermaid, they would be very freaked out if they knew their daughter was swimming all the way to Ireland.

Bella met up with Will at the airport and then busied herself making appointments with her friends for the next few days. It was great catching up, having a joyful time before the depressing funeral and Will hearing " hopefully that would cheer her up.

The funeral was very sad and there were lots of tears.

The next day was the Will Hearing. Bella, Will, her parents and sisters walked into Court for the hearing of the Will. No one had any idea who would be getting what.

"Order. The court session has now begun."

Bella heard drabble of words, not really paying attention. She heard Siobhan Mackenzie's name quite a few times. Then she heard her own name and an amazing sum of money and was instantly alert. Everyone was starting at her.

"Whatâ€?" she whispered to Will.

"Your aunt left you like five million dollars!" Her draw dropped.

"F-f-five million?"

"Yeah! Turns out she was real wealthyâ€!"

Bella still had her mouth wide open.

"Bella, you're swallowing flies."

"Oh!" she shut her mouth. "I'm a millionaire?" she said still getting over her shock.

"Yip." Will was just as shocked yet excited.

"Wait, what did the rest of my family get?"

"Your mother got the \$6 million house and your father got all the cars and \$1 million, your sisters both got about \$4 million eachâ€!"

"wow. She was really generous."

"Yeahâ€!"

**A/N: **_*Yet again the naughty Krystalslazz uploadsâ€| I really need to study harderâ€|oh well. I had a free moment. Enjoy!*_*

65. Chapter 65

Chapter 65

"Who would've thought...?" Bella mused to herself. "Oh my gosh Will!" she exclaimed to him, "This means we can buy Mako easily!"

"Yeah! But are you sure that's what you want to do with your money?"

"Yes." She replied firmly, "It will be a great place to bring up Jake safely,"

OoOoO

_Later that day... (once the initial shock had worn off...)__

"Come on Will," Bella led him by the hand

"Where are we going?"

"You'll see."

The couple were walking down the grassy hills to the rock pools and caves by the sea. Large waves were crashing onto the rocks as Bella led Will to a place she knew well.

"You know I first changed in Ireland? Well, I thought this'd be a great opportunity to show you where," Bella announced as they walked into a large cave that looked amazingly like the moon pool.

"Wow..."

Bella took a deep breath. "Oh, I feel at home already," she whispered. Before Will could realise, she had dived in. She moved round the pool and then settled on the ledge, placing her chin on her hands. "Isn't it beautiful," she sighed looking up at Will. He nodded smiling. He took his shirt and shoes off, then sliding into the water beside her. "I've seen better."

"Oh?"

"You silly," he smiled. She giggled at his comment. They leaned in and shared a loving kiss, Bella's arms twisting around Will's neck.

**A/N: Thanks to Paradox Tremors for this idea :)

"Did you hear the news?" Cleo asked Lewis excitedly.

"No?"

"Bella is a millionaire," she said in a sing-song voice. "You know how her great aunt was extremely wealthy..."

"No..."

"Oh, well she was. Anyway, in her will, Bella inherited over \$4 million!"

"Wow." Lewis said simply, slack-jawed.

OoOoO

As soon as Bella opened the door, Jacob ran and hugged his mother's leg. She picked him up and snuggled him into the crook of her neck.

"I missed you mama,"

"I missed you too Jakey," She looked into her boy's eyes. Just then, Will walked in the door.

"How's my little man?" he asked ruffling his dirty blonde hair.

"Daddy!" Bella handed her son to his father smiling at Jake's enthusiasm. By now, Cleo and Lewis had come to the door along with Jennifer walking beside them. They smiled at the family reunion. Bella hugged them.

"Welcome home Millionaire!" Bella laughed at this. They all went and sat on the couches in Cleo and Lewis' lounge.

Jake and Jennifer sat together on the floor playing with their toys.

"The two have them have become much closer over the past few weeks," Cleo said as she noticed Bella and Will looking at the kids.

"Good." Bella smiled. "So what have they been up to?"

"Playing, we took them both swimming everyday at the moon pool. I have to say that they are becoming amazing swimmers." Cleo said.

OoOoO

A few hours later...

"Lewis, how much did the council want for Mako Island?"

"About \$4.5 million, why?"

"Well, I have the money now to buy it..."

"Bella! We can't let you use up all your money on buying the island!" Lewis exclaimed

"Why not?" she asked stubbornly

"You have a growing family. Besides, it's your money and we want to help, we haven't been fundraising for nothing!"

"Okay, but I still want to pay for the majority."

"We can't let you do that..."

>"Come on! I just inherited \$5 mil! I'm never going to use all that up, besides I don't need to be rich to enjoy life." <p>

"Okay," Lewis said defeated, "How about we have a meeting tomorrow to discuss how much money we have?"

OoOoO

The next day...

"Rikki has taken the treasures collected to the council in your absence. She was the only one who could "with her licence I mean" but she traded them in for money." Lewis said

Rikki nodded.

"How much?" Bella asked.

Everyone looked to Rikki. "About \$2.3 million for those treasures and artefacts."

"This means that half the cost is already sorted." Lewis announced. "Cleo and I have about \$200 K that we can spare" I get paid quite

a lot. We were going to buy a bigger house with it but the island will do. So how much do you guys have?"

Emma spoke up, "In total we all have about \$500 K towards it."

"So that means that we have about \$3 million total. We are \$1.5 mil short."

"I can cover that!" Bella said quickly. "\$1.5 million is only like a 3rd of my money. I'll still be a millionaire if that's what you are worried about."

"Fine, we are sorted then." Lewis agreed reluctantly, giving in to Bella's persistence. "We'll take our offer to the council tomorrow after work â€“ before it closes."

"Sweet."

A/N: **_I'm going to have to stop saying I won't be uploading...I always seem to...I'm so irresponsible...oh well! Writing is addicting! I'm not sure how many chapters more there'll be...maybe two left of this story? Don't worry! I am most definitely writing a sequel. Have a great day :D Keep on Reviewing.**_

**P.S: Remember I take all ideas into consideration so if you have an idea for the sequel please let me know by reviewing or private message.**

66. Chapter 66

Chapter 66

_The Council...the following day....

Everyone was very excited. Their dream was very close to coming true. Zane offered to look after all five kids in the manager's office while everyone else went. It was a Saturday. This made it very convenient for Emma and Bella who were school teachers, everyone else came after work, leaving slightly early. Zane gave Rikki full permission to use some of his family's wealth for the island fund.

OoOoO

"So all of you want part ownership of Mako Island?" They nodded.
"Under the names of Mr and Mrs Bennett, Charles, Dove, Benjamin and McCartney?" Again they nodded.

"All right then. So how much money are you proposing?"

"The required \$4.5 million that you guys suggested and the promise to keep half the island for public use and keeping it a reserve."

"Hmm. Let me discuss this with my counsel, won't be but a moment."

The group waited in anticipation hearing the muffled discussion amongst the three council members. They came out of the discussion room. "We have come to a decision. For that specified amount, we will

sell you the island..." He was interrupted by a couple of jumping, screaming young women, obviously very excited, even Rikki was beaming.

"...if..." he continued. They stopped smiles disappearing.

"If what?" Lewis asked cautiously.

"If you sign these documents declaring half the island for public use, and sign the conditions of sale..."

"Yes sir. We take all the terms."

"Well then, consider it sold. We just need to get it in writing."

The excited group signed the documents and the required money. Rikki hurried back to the cafe so that Zane also could sign the document.

"Done!"

OoOoO

The next morning, conveniently it was majority's day off. Anna had made no appointments for the day so she was free and Ben was still on sick leave. The mermaids and merman swam across to Mako, their kids in tow, Eric now able to swim slowly. The other guys came over in Zane's boat to their newly purchased island. Emma and Rikki stayed at the moon pool with the kids and Ash and Zane came to keep them company. Everyone else set out to find the perfect place for their crystallised water village. They soon came upon a clearing that was perfect for their needs. The good thing was that they could make the houses around the trees in case they needed more space. Will went and got the others from the moon pool as Anna directed her own power as well as telling Cleo and Ben what to do. She told them how to design the walls and roves and foundation, an amazing amount of water coming from a small steam about ten metres away. On Anna's signal Bella stretched her hand out. The water turned into jelly. She pulled it back and then forward again and the houses turned hard. Anna had left spaces for doors and windows. The group would bring furnishings and carpets the following day.

It was quite a sight to see. There were five pale blue, but now quite see through structures.

"We'll have to put up trespasser signs or a thicket of something to block the public view of this place," Will said once he returned from gathering the others.

"Yeah, I agree," Lewis replied. "We'll set this half of the island private property and the other half public?"

"Yeah." Everyone agreed.

"Oh, this is so exciting!" Cleo exclaimed.

OoOoO

Soon everything was sorted. Zane and Ash had gone ashore and bought

large carpets for each room of each house. Ben had attached the windows and doors by making hinges out of water and then Bella coaxed Jake to turn them into elastic. Perfect.

The five houses looked absolutely amazing when fully furnished. Though there wouldn't be electricity, Rikki and Anna could easily cook all the food and Emma and Ben could keep it cool. They did however bring bathroom utilities over. Ben somehow managed to install them.

The only visitors that they would have would be the parents who knew their secrets. The group decided to fully furnish Rikki and Zane's house and use it for their non-mermaid friends to visit and it would be their postal address. Everyone else decided to rent out their houses as they wouldn't be used for a very long time...also it would give them another source of income.

Everyone settled in nicely and enjoyed the outdoors. This would give the kids more swimming time and it would be perfect. It was easy to see that they would be living there for the rest of their lives...

67. AN: The End for now

THE END ****

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><p>AN:**_**Hey everyone, thanks so much for reading this story. Now however, it has **_**come to an end.**_** Never fear there is a sequel! It starts off from where this left off but 5 years later so their families' are bigger and their kids are older...I hope you enjoy it as much as you did this one. Thanks so much for the lovely reviews, I really appreciated them. Continue to PM me and suggest ideas, Love you guys!**_

**Thanks so much,**

** Krystalslazz**

* * *

><p>PLEASE REVIEW AND TELL ME WHAT YOU THOUGHT OF THIS STORY AS A WHOLE!_

* * *

><p>[The Sequel is called 'H2O Just Add Water, A Fishy Tale, the Sequel. Currently (as of 84/14) there are 70 chapters. Enjoy!]_

>

Personally, I believe it contains some of my best writing. In my opinion, the storylines are better also, but you decide.

End
file.